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PAGE 17

Lack of space 'critical' at U of Calgary

Education. Entrance grade averages, student applicants spike

JEREMY NOLAIS
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Calgary's largest post-secondary institution will fall thousands of seats short of student demand in the years ahead, according to new provincial data, and a top executive warns the space crunch on campus is already driving up entrance requirements.

The provincial data, published in December, forecasts anticipated student demand up to the 2022-23 school year.

While the Alberta post-secondary sector as a whole appears healthy, with 7,280 student seats over and above anticipated peak demand, the University of Calgary's anticipated student capacity of 26,685 could be 4,600 seats short in that time. By comparison, the next greatest space deficit is seen at the University of Alberta, which could be up to 465 seats short.

"The bottom line is we know there's enrolment challenges for all of Calgary, but particularly at the University of Calgary," said Dru Marshall, the U of C's provost. "We're working really closely with the ministry. We think this is a critical issue that needs to be dealt with."

Marshall said she actually believed the school's high school entrance grade average of 82.3 per cent was too low when she came aboard in 2011. Since then, however, it has risen steadily and is bordering on 85 per cent.

"To go above 85 (per cent), for me, is really concerning when you talk about (student) access," Marshall said, adding, "and when you have some faculties approaching 90, I really get concerned because then post-secondary education is not as successful as it should be."

The U of C is also now admitting just one student for every 2.71 applicants, well over the 2.1 mark seen five years ago as well as the U of A's 2013-14 entrance ratio of 2.13.

The problem on campus is due to both a lack of funding and actual physical space. The province has committed to expanding the Schulich School of Engineering, but classrooms currently remain crammed.

Bulk of applicants believe Calgary is the place to be for post-secondary. Turn to page 6.

BUSKING GOES UNDER MICROSCOPE

Busker Kyle Green stands on 17 Avenue, guitar in hand. He applied for an official busker ID with the city and performed all summer but this year the city has plans to change the busking rules and hopes to look to the public for ideas on how to improve the street-performance culture in Calgary. For the story, see page 8. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

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NEWS 1

Charges. Alleged cab assault 'reflects badly' on industry

The general manager of Associated Cab Ltd. said charges laid against one of their stand-in drivers reflects poorly on the industry but he added he feels taxis are still a safe mode of transportation.

"They are more then safe," said Jeff Garland. "Unfortunately, you get bad apples in every group, and it doesn't matter what business it is, but people have to look out for their safety."

According to the Calgary Police Service, 35-year-old Umar Khayyam was charged with sexual assault after he allegedly forced himself on a woman he was driving on Jan. 25.

"It reflects badly on the whole industry … that you get these guys out there that do things that they shouldn't be doing, and it doesn't help anybody," said Garland.

Police accuse Khayyam of asking the woman "inappropriate personal questions" during the trip, and when the two arrived at her residence, he allegedly drove to a nearby back alley and told her to get out of the car.

When she refused, he allegedly pulled her out of the car by her arm, grabbed her and started kissing her. It was only when the man slipped on ice causing both to fall that she escaped and was able to run home.

Garland said the man was leasing a cab from a regular and had only been driving with Associated Cab since April. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

Karen Durrie's 17-year-old son suffers from sinus infections and a chronic cough, but Durrie said the problem hasn't been properly diagnosed because they've been left without a family doctor for four years. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Many are 'left hanging' without a family doctor

Health care. Local pharmacists could possibly help take the load off physicians

JENNIFER FRIESEN
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Karen Durrie has spent more hours than she can count sitting in walk-in clinic waiting rooms. Ever since her pediatrics clinic switched to referrals-only four years ago, her two children have been left without a family doctor.

"We've been left hanging this whole time," said Durrie. Her 17-year-old son, Marlon, suffers from sinus infections and a chronic cough that "sometimes lasts for months on end."

"The cough just doesn't go away; it's to the point that his ribs get sore," she said. "And you try to do the right thing as a parent and get him medical help and get to the bottom of this, but there's no one there to support you. It's just emergency care all the time."

Durrie said she's tried clinic after clinic, searching through lists of doctors taking new patients. But the lists were often outdated, and she was told that the clinics hadn't taken new patients in more than two years.

And the Durrie family isn't alone in their search.

As of last fall, there were 385 member doctors and 86 clinics serving 361,000 patients in the Calgary Foothills network, according to Keith Bradford, communications manager at Calgary Foothills Primary Care Network. That works out to each doctor caring for almost 1,000 patients.

A new pharmacy program, RxEACH, was launched by AHS last year to study how effective pharmacists could be as health-care providers. The program, which is set to wrap up in the fall, is training pharmacists across Alberta to recognize and monitor health concerns, focusing on developing vascular diseases.

"Calgary is a big city, and so there's a difficulty in getting a regular family doctor," said Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn, department head of Community Health Sciences and a nephrologist with AHS in Calgary.

"That could be considered a barrier to care, and so having a pharmacist would be an alternative then for some of those patients."

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Public Transportation

System upgrade may improve accuracy of transit arrival times

Woes around inaccurate real-time tracking could be eased after a system upgrade, says Calgary Transit.

After rejigging the real-time system last week, Stephen Tauro, communications strategist for Calgary Transit, said the complaints about the three-month-old system have gone from a boil to a simmer — adding that although they don't keep track of the number of complaints, the phone lines have been noticeably quieter after the switch.

"We've asked customers for feedback to help improve the system," he said. "That's what's ultimately going to help us get accurate real-time information."

The culprit, he added, was stale data making its way into real-time estimates, and those numbers — though a rarity — were completely off.

"There are a couple of situations where we need to make tweaks, and that's what we did," said Tauro. "It was showing incorrect stop times, but (those instances) were very rare."

The upgrade focused on that issue along with a few others. HELEN PIKE/METRO

Airdrie homeless choose streets over city shelters

Homelessness. Most people living on the streets and parking lots across the city are young adults and kids, mayor says

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For months, Monita Gourlie called the Airdrie Walmart parking lot home after she lost everything.

With no shelter in the city, she said she and other homeless people face the elements when they can't seek refuge with friends and families.

As its population grows, Airdrie is facing growing pains. It's a conversation Mayor Peter Brown believes city residents need to start having.

"There's definitely issues, but at this time it has not been something we've really talked about," Brown said. "You feel sick to your stomach when people have those kind of challenges."

The mayor said most homeless people in Airdrie that he's aware of are young adults and kids, who couch surf to get away from uncomfortable family situations.

For Gourlie, homelessness came after her 23-year marriage crumbled and her prominent place in the community fell.

She lost all belongings and was kicked out of the apartment she could no longer afford. She lived in her truck from September up until just a few weeks ago.

But what hurt the most, she said, was not being able to count on a community she called home for eight years.

"I was begging to get some help," said Gourlie. "I had nowhere to go, and not a soul would open the door to say, 'Hey, rest your head here.' Nowhere. So I ended up in my truck."

Sue Methuen, executive director with the Airdrie Food Bank, said the number of clients seeking "emergency hampers" is relatively low but the precise number of people living on the street isn't clear.

"It does happen," she said. "Last year we had a number of people who came and said they have no place to live."

Gourlie sought help from the food bank as well as Community Links, two resources she said saved her life.

They gave her money for gas in the form of gift cards. They gave her a sleeping bag and helped her find a place to shower when she needed it.

But a place to rest her head, like the old RCMP building in town she said has been sitting empty, just wasn't an option.

Methuen said getting a shelter is complicated, adding you can't just open an empty spot and tell people to go sleep there.

And while some people relocate to Calgary — something the food bank often recommends — not everyone is keen to move.

Gourlie said the drive to Calgary was too much for her to handle, fearing once in the much bigger city to the south, she would be turned away from shelters and end up back in her truck.

Quoted

"There's definitely issues, but at this time it has not been something we've really talked about."

Airdrie Mayor Peter Brown on the realities facing the community's homeless

It's unclear how many people are living out of their cars or are otherwise homeless in Airdrie, but, as the local food bank points out, it's an issue the city will increasingly have to face. PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Calgary. City to hire integrity chief

Calgary moved ahead Tuesday with a plan to hire an independent "integrity commissioner" who can investigate allegations of misconduct against members of city council.

The city's priorities and finance committee voted unanimously in favour of creating the position, which would be similar to existing investigative bodies in other municipalities.

Coun. Ward Sutherland, the committee vice-chair, said the goal is to find "an independent individual who can do the investigation and also come up with an appropriate resolution."

He said the ideal would be to find "someone like a retired judge" who could be called in on a case-by-case basis.

"This person would be on a retainer, so they're not full-time," Sutherland said.

The move comes after a closed-door meeting on Dec. 15, in which the mayor and councillors addressed a confidential "personnel" matter resulting in members of council agreeing to undergo "respectful workplace" training.

Mayor Naheed Nenshi later told Metro the matter concerned "a number of small things that really all went around respectful workplace, whether that is comments of a sexual nature or bullying," but the specifics have not been made public.

ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO

Quoted

"This person would be on retainer, so they're not full-time."

Coun. Ward Sutherland on the city's search for an independent person to look into allegations of misconduct at city hall

More adults cycling; declines among kids and teens: Report

Bruce Stephen stops at the corner of 5 Avenue SW while riding along the 7 Street cycle track in downtown Calgary on Tuesday. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

ROBSON FLETCHER
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The proportion of people opting for bicycles to get around Calgary has remained small and steady over the past decade but the demographics of those cyclists has changed, according to a major study of transportation habits.

The rates of riding dropped sharply in children, teens, and adults in their early 20s but grew among other adults, particularly those aged 25 to 34 and, to a lesser extent, 45 to 54.

The changes roughly "compensate" for one another and "overall bike mode share remained stable" between 2001 and 2011, according to the third volume of the Changing Travel Habits in the Calgary Region report.

The biggest increase was among 25-to-34-year-olds, whose bike mode share grew from about 0.7 per cent to 1.3 per cent. That age range also saw its share of all weekday bike trips grow from roughly 10 per cent to 27 per cent over the decade.

As the bike numbers are still tiny compared to other transportation choices like cars, transit, and walking, the report cautions the limited data set means the numbers should be considered "as a reference."

City cycling coordinator Tom Thivener said the Calgary data, while limited, corresponds with a demographic "trend" observed in other jurisdictions.

"Younger people, they're not necessarily looking for the same things as their parents and grandparents," Thivener said of young adults' transportation choices.

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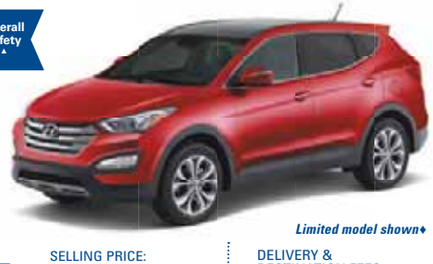

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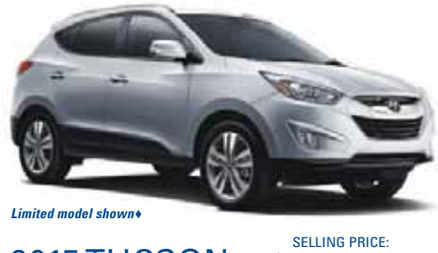

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Calgary campuses projected to see most growth in Alberta

Education. Student rep fears choices for learners will be limited

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Even as officials with the University of Calgary warn that space is already at a premium on their campus, provincial projections suggest city institutions will add more learners than those in the rest of the province combined.

Over the next decade, Calgary is expected to see peak enrolment spike by 7,145 students, accounting for about 57 per cent of Alberta's total growth.

Data indicates demand for spaces may be on the rise as well, as projections at the end of 2013 suggested the Calgary region as a whole would have the capacity to meet peak demand and still have 98 seats to spare. Now, forecasts suggest the city could be as many as 2,546 spaces short.

But Craig Loewen, press secretary for provincial Advanced Education Minister Don Scott, downplayed concerns about student applicants being turned away. He said the province takes a more holistic approach to enrolment.

In Calgary, for example, Mount Royal University will actually have 800 or more seats over anticipated peak demand, and a copy of the institution's draft 10-year strategic plan indicates officials will push hard to bump up its student head count by 60 per cent in the years ahead.

"There are also other options throughout Campus Alberta," he said. "If you want to go to a bachelor of arts program at the U of C and your marks aren't there, maybe you can get in at Mount Royal or at St. Mary's University and so on."

Still, Levi Nilson with the U of C Students' Union said the Calgary enrolment picture wasn't pretty, especially with a potential economic downturn on the horizon.

"We know that more people are going to be going back to school as oil (prices) continue to fall," he said. "It's very concerning for us that we're not able to have as many students as we need; we don't have the infrastructure to accommodate these students."

Levi Nilson with the University of Calgary Students' Union worries more students will be turned away from his school in the year ahead. METRO FILE

Details

- While not at the pace officials would like, the University of Calgary's total enrolment has steadily risen in recent years to 28,341 full-load equivalent students in 2012-13, up from a little less than 24,400 in 2008-09. By comparison, Mount Royal University's enrolment actually declined by 193 students from 2012-13 to 2013-14, a move likely steered by heavy cuts in the 2013 provincial budget.
- Post-secondary schools in the Calgary region are targeted the most by prospective students, with 42,790 applications filed ahead of the 2013-14 school year. By comparison, the Edmonton region saw 34,863 applications.

LGBTQ

Dirks makes first GSA visit

Alberta's education boss paid a visit to an Edmonton gay-straight alliance Tuesday — his first stop in a series of consultations across the province about LGBTQ youth.

Minister Gordon Dirks was invited to the weekly meeting at the Victoria School of Arts to talk with members of the school's QSA (queer-straight alliance), said spokesman David Heyman.

"It was a friendly, open discussion about a variety of issues, including mental health, tolerance and the importance of GSAs/QSAs," he said in an email, noting students expressed how much they loved being part of the QSA.

The government is considering a potential redraft of the controversial Bill 10, which would legislate the treatment of GSAs in schools across the province.

Victoria Grade 12 student Tybon Walker took part in Tuesday's meeting and called the minister's visit fairly normal at first but pointed out that some of his questions made students uncomfortable.

"At one point he decided to ask why we thought there were no boys in the club," Walker said. "It caught me ... off-guard because we talked about it as a place for people of all gender identities to explore themselves, and not everyone who looks like a girl actually identifies as a girl."

LEAH HOLOIDAY/METRO

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City of Calgary looking to update busker ID program

Street performers. Manager of culture says Calgary will be looking to other cities around the world, in Canada for best practices

HELEN PIKE
helen.pike@metronews.ca

The City of Calgary is working to revamp its busker ID program, which has been in place since 2009.

With more than 800 buskers on offer, officials are saying it's time for a change and hope to redefine what it means to be a street performer.

As it stands, no new IDs have been issued, and buskers with last year's paperwork can keep performing until May 2015, when the city hopes to roll out a new program.

The details haven't been worked out yet, but Sarah Iley, manager of culture with the City of Calgary, said part of the process will include public consultation.

"We need to look at it and make sure it's as good as it can be," Iley said, adding "there are concerns."

"It's a lot of people, and sometimes there's congestion in terms of where they want to be performing," she said.

Kyle Green, who started busking last summer, said performance spaces can get crowded, especially at popular locations.

"That's why they made it so you can only busk for an hour in one place," said Green. "Certain people, they busk longer than the hour. They just keep going; it makes it awkward."

Iley said there's always room for improvement.

She added that the whole busking industry has really changed since 2009 and Calgary will be looking to other cities around the world and in Canada for best practices.

Green said he's noticed mostly country acts filling the streets and added that, when you're playing more hard rock in the core, where tourists want more twang, standing out is tough.

"They generally just play guitar like myself, but there are also others on Stephen Avenue who play accordion or violin — more country-oriented instruments," Green said. "It's mostly musical."

He added that there can be the occasional puppeteer or caricature artist — but folk and country buskers are definitely a staple.

"People tend to think of buskers as a single person with a guitar or violin or something, but there's a huge range of talent," Iley said. "That's one of the things we want to explore: are we providing the right kinds of platforms, locations and stages for a wide variety of busking, and what does that look like?"

Iley referenced the fact that Cirque du Soleil started as a street-performance act and said she'd like to see a change from the "guy with a guitar" trope, adding it would be nice to entertain the idea of a busker festival in Calgary.

Busking in Calgary

- Buskers can only perform for one hour per location, according to rules posted on the City of Calgary website.
- There are about 800 ID-holding buskers in the city.
- Some buskers perform year-round.
- Buskers with a basic ID can't wield swords or use fire in their performances.

Cam Penner jams for passersby on Stephen Avenue, a Calgary busking hot spot. The city is revamping their busker ID program for May. METRO FILE

Victoria Park station

Man falls onto LRT tracks after short-lived pursuit

Police and Calgary Transit officers are investigating after a man fell from a pedestrian bridge onto tracks below.

At approximately 1:30 p.m., a call came in to police about a man who had fallen on the Victoria Park LRT tracks.

Brian Whitelaw, coordinator of public safety and enforcement with Calgary Transit, said the man was stopped by peace officers who were checking fares at the Victoria Park Stampede station. When he was unable to present valid fare, they ran his name through a police database and discovered there was a warrant for his arrest.

He fled, Whitelaw said, and two peace officers chased the man in a roughly 10-second pursuit. He ran up the ramp at the C-Train station, where he went over a wall on the walkway, eventually making his way over a ledge. Officers attempted to grab him, but he fell, landing on his feet on the tracks below.

"He may have seen an escape route," said Whitelaw. "I don't know if he intended to jump to the tracks below or whether he wanted to run on the outside of the wall."

Adam Loria with EMS said the young man, believed to be in his 20s, was transported to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

Whitelaw said that, from the security footage he reviewed, it looks as though the man broke his leg and sustained a head injury.

He will remain in hospital under arrest until his overall health is determined.

HELEN PIKE/METRO

Highway 1A

Pair accused of street racing at double the limit outside Calgary

Two men in their 20s have been charged with various traffic offences after officers clocked them driving more than 100 kilometres over the posted limit west of Calgary.

According to a release from RCMP, at roughly 4 p.m. on Feb. 1, two officers from the Cochrane Integrated Traffic Unit, which is composed of both RCMP and Alberta highway sheriffs, were conducting speed enforcement on Highway 1A between Calgary and the Town of Cochrane.

Hearing the sound of what police described as "racing motors," the officers looked up to see two Toyota Scions racing toward them at "extremely high rates of speed."

Both cars were clocked travelling 200 km/h in a 100 km/h zone.

Now, two men from Calgary — a 21-year-old and a 26-year-old — are facing charges of racing on a highway and speeding.

Darrin Turnbull, of the Southern Alberta Integrated Traffic Unit, said if the drivers were to have crashed, the results would have been "catastrophic."

Both men will appear in Cochrane Provincial Court on March 27.

This is the second time officers say they have found a motorist blowing past the posted speed limit in the last week. On Jan. 28, a 17-year-old boy was charged with driving 182 km/h in an 80 km/h zone near Airdrie. METRO

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$1069	$989	$989	$999	$999	$1159

LONDON, UK	EDINBURGH	MANCHESTER	GENEVA	ZURICH	ISTANBUL
FEBRUARY 11, 2015 – MARCH 22, 2015	JUNE 19, 2015 – AUGUST 22, 2015	JULY 3, 2015 – AUGUST 22, 2015	FEBRUARY 11, 2015 – MAY 6, 2015	FEBRUARY 11, 2015 – MAY 6, 2015	FEBRUARY 11, 2015 – MAY 6, 2015
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Ex-trustee queries school lottery support

Education. Board has said controversial process is 'fair'

JEREMY NOLAIS
jeremy.nolais@metronews.ca

A former Calgary public-school trustee says she's not aware of parents ever being asked whether they support enrolment lotteries and alluded to having fears that those forced to leave their education fate to chance are being used as political pawns.

Carol Bazinet, who served as a Calgary Board of Education trustee for 10 years up until 2013, raised questions during an interview on News Talk 770 Tuesday about the proliferation of enrolment lotteries.

The board has recently said it could be required to host up to 42 such lotteries ahead of the 2015-16 school year as student demand continues to surge and new facilities to house them won't be ready until fall 2016 at the earliest.

But Bazinet said administrators were solely behind the decision to go the "easy route" and turn to lotteries — she said other boards don't rely on similar practices.

"There wasn't a lot of public consultation, if any, done on coming up with what the lottery system would be," she said in the radio interview. "Parents didn't really have any input in that."

Bazinet said changing a school's grade configurations, intake boundaries or running the building overcapacity and putting students in classrooms on gym stages or in learning commons areas are other options.

But she hinted that there could be more at play in the board's strategy, namely an ongoing push to pressure the province to boost education funding.

"Both of them (the board and the province) like to point fingers at each the other — I don't think parents appreciate that," she said. "I think they want them to be working together and all I can say is, I sure hope this is not something that's meant to bring out more parent outcry to say 'Yes, we absolutely need more schools.'"

The board's rationale

In a recent interview, the Calgary Board of Education's director of planning and transportation, Darlene Unruh, explained why the board hosts the lotteries.

- "We wanted a system that was consistent throughout all our schools, so that the parents that they serve and the families that we serve, regardless of what school you apply to, would see it as a fair way of addressing overcrowding of schools," she said at the time.

In a follow-up interview with Metro, Bazinet said she had no doubt the board is in need of new facilities — projections suggest the board could take in more than 4,000 additional students this fall alone.

But still she vouched for parents having a choice on the best accommodation method for their community. As well, she questioned whether the board was being proactive enough in anticipating population shifts.

"I just think that there's not as much work being done in terms of doing the projections and doing the hard work of getting out and consulting with parents," she said.

Bazinet agreed that trustees are ultimately the voice of the public.

"Perhaps they should be asking for other resolutions," she said.

Ahead of the current school year, the CBE held 29 lotteries at facilities hosting both regular as well as alternative education programs.

Carol Bazinet is seen during her time as a Calgary Board of Education trustee. METRO FILE

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RCMP arrest Awso Peshdary on terrorism-related charges

National security. Peshdary was previously swept up in a separate probe in August 2010

The RCMP have arrested Awso Peshdary, 25, and charged him with a number of terrorism-related offences including conspiring with John Maguire, a former University of Ottawa student who made headlines with a video supporting ISIL and warning of, and encouraging, further attacks on Canada.

Peshdary is in police custody, faces four charges and is expected to appear in a bail court in Ottawa on Wednesday. He is facing charges of participating in, conspiring to participate in and facilitating the activity of a terrorist group.

Khadar Khalib, 23, who is also believed to be overseas, is charged with leaving Canada to participate in, counselling a person to participate in and conspiring to participate, or to contribute in an activity of a terrorist group.

"These charges speak to our ability to tackle a threat that is multifaceted and constantly evolving," assistant RCMP commissioner James Malizia said in a statement.

"Through collaborative efforts with our partners, we were able to disrupt an organized network associated with (ISIL). This network was involved in recruiting individuals for terrorism purposes and in sending them into Syria and Iraq for the benefit of this terrorist group."

News of Peshdary's arrest was released at a news conference in Ottawa Tuesday afternoon.

Despite reports that Maguire had been killed in fighting in the middle east, RCMP say they have no information to substantiate those reports.

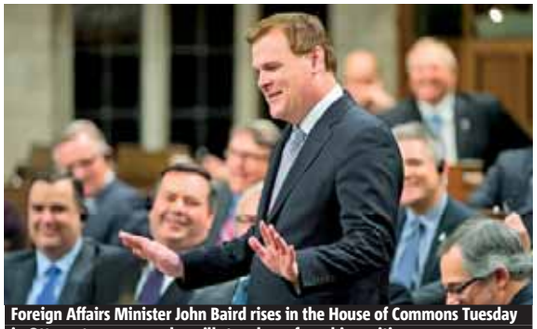
Peshdary's defence lawyer, Richard Morris, slammed the RCMP's disclosure, saying they revealed more information to the press than they did to him.

He said he received a phone call that his client had been arrested and was read four charges over the phone but given no other information about the case.

LUCY HAINES/METRO IN OTTAWA, WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS AND TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Chief Superintendent Jennifer Strachan Criminal Operations Officer RCMP O Division announces during a news conference in Ottawa on Tuesday that the RCMP have laid terror charges against three people. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

John Baird resignation creates hole at home



Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird rises in the House of Commons Tuesday in Ottawa to announce he will step down from his position. THE CANADIAN PRESS

One of Stephen Harper's most experienced ministers resigned his plum foreign affairs post Tuesday, leaving a void around the Conservative cabinet table at a critical juncture in both domestic and international affairs.

John Baird was a prominent voice for Canada on the world stage and a multi-faceted lieutenant for Harper; his departure leaves many wondering who can carry the ball amid upheaval abroad and an election on the horizon at home.

The only one who seemed upbeat about the state of things was Baird himself.

"Last night, I spoke to the prime minister and informed him that I was standing down from cabinet," Baird told a hushed House of Commons.

"I will miss this place very much and many of the people in it, on all sides, but the time has come for me to start a new chapter in my life."

Baird said he has no plans to run for re-election and will surrender his seat — he represents the Ottawa riding of Nepean — in the coming weeks.

Trade Minister Ed Fast will stand in for Baird at Foreign Affairs.

In a statement that was, oddly, delivered only on paper and not in person, Harper said he accepted Baird's resignation "with great regret and affection."

"John has always been willing to do a lot of the heavy lifting in my various cabinets and has assumed daunting new responsibilities with unsurpassed energy, commitment and professionalism, never losing sight of the fact that he was serving the Canadian people."

Though Baird took on Foreign Affairs with the same bulldog bravado that characterized his 20 years in politics, his views grew nuanced over time, leading to a softer touch on some files than the prime minister wanted, Conservative sources said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Argentina. Dead man asked for president to be arrested

Investigators, examining the death of a prosecutor who accused Argentine President Cristina Fernandez of agreeing to shield the alleged masterminds of a 1994 terror bombing, said Tuesday they have found a draft document he wrote requesting her arrest.

Chief investigator Viviana Fein said the draft detention request was found in a trash bin of the apartment where Alberto Nisman's body was discovered on Jan. 18.

It was not included in a complaint Nisman had filed in federal court days earlier. Nisman was found dead of a gunshot wound in his bathroom hours before he was to appear in Congress to detail his allegations that Fernandez agreed to protect those responsible for the 1994 bombing of Buenos Aires' largest Jewish community centre.

The attack, which killed 85 people, remains unsolved. Fernandez has dismissed the allegations against her.

Fein at first denied the existence of the document after Argentina's Clarin newspaper published an article about it on Sunday. Cabinet chief Jorge Capitanich ripped up the article in front of reporters on Monday.

Argentina's President Cristina Fernandez. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

But Clarin then published a copy of the draft, which was dated from June 2014. It said Nisman also had considered requesting arrest orders against Fernandez's foreign minister, Hector Timerman, and other officials in her government. Conspiracy theories have swirled around Nisman's death since his body was found. Authorities initially said he likely committed suicide.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Two prisoners executed in Jordan after ISIL kills pilot

Middle East. A government spokesman said Sajida al-Rishawi and Ziad al-Karbouli had been put to death

A Jordanian government spokesman says Jordan has executed two prisoners, including a would-be female suicide bomber from al-Qaida.

The executions Wednesday came just hours after militants from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) released a video purportedly showing a captured Jordanian fighter pilot being burned alive in a cage.

Jordan had vowed a swift and lethal response.

Government spokesman Mohammed al-Momani said that two prisoners, Sajida al-Rishawi and Ziad al-Karbouli, were executed Wednesday.

Jordan's military earlier confirmed the death of Lt. Muath Al-Kaseasbeh, 26, who was captured by the extremists in December when his F-16 crashed while he was flying a mission as part of the U.S.-led air campaign against ISIL.

Anwar al-Tarawneh, centre, the wife of Jordanian pilot, Lt. Muath al-Kaseasbeh, holds a poster of him. An online video that bears the logo of the militant group's media service purportedly shows the pilot being killed. RAAD ADAYLE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In the past week, the militants had not responded to demands by Jordanian authorities to deliver proof the airman was alive so a prisoner swap could be made.

The killing of the pilot appeared aimed at pressuring the government of Jordan — a close U.S. ally — to leave the coalition that has carried out months of airstrikes targeting ISIL positions in Syria and Iraq.

King Abdullah II broadcast a speech on Jordanian TV on Tuesday evening, confirming the pilot's death "with sorrow and anger," and urging his countrymen to unite.

"Our punishment and revenge will be as huge as the loss of the Jordanians," said the spokesman of the armed forces, Mamdouh al-Ameri.

The 20-minute video purportedly showing the pilot's killing was released on militant websites and bore the logo of the extremist group's al-Furqan media service. The clip featured the slick production and graphics used in previous Islamic State videos.

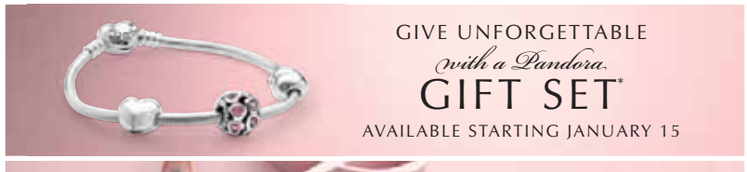
The pilot showed signs of having been beaten, including a black eye. Toward the end of the video, he was shown wearing an orange jumpsuit. He stood in an outdoor cage as a masked militant ignited a line of fuel leading to it.

The video, which could not immediately be confirmed independently by The Associated Press, threatened other purported Jordanian pilots by name. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Executions

Al-Rishawi, 44, faced death by hanging for her role in triple Amman hotel bombings in 2005. Her suicide belt did not detonate at the time and she fled the scene, but was quickly arrested. After a televised confession, she recanted, but her appeal was turned down.

- Al-Rishawi, an Iraqi national, has close family ties to the Iraqi branch of al-Qaida, a precursor of ISIL militants.



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Crime

Man convicted over 'revenge porn' site

A San Diego man has been convicted of running a "revenge porn" website where people posted nude pictures of their ex-lovers, who then had to pay the man to take down the images.

Kevin Bollaert, 28, was found guilty Monday of 27 counts, including identity theft and extortion, and faces up to 20 years in prison. The San Diego County Superior Court jury was unable to reach verdicts on two charges of identity theft and conspiracy, and a judge declared a mistrial on the counts.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York

Six dead, 12 injured in train collision

A commuter train slammed into a sport utility vehicle stuck on the tracks Tuesday evening, killing six people, mostly on the train, and injuring at least 12 others, authorities said.

The northbound train struck a Jeep Cherokee at a railroad crossing in Valhalla, about 32 kilometres north of New York City, Metro-North Railroad spokesman Aaron Donovan said. The SUV's driver and five people aboard the train were killed, he said.

Metro-North is the nation's second-busiest railroad, after the Long Island Rail Road. It was formed in 1983. It serves about 280,000 riders a day in New York and Connecticut.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UN

Court clears Croats, Serbs of genocide in 1990s war

The United Nations' top court ruled Tuesday that Serbia and Croatia did not commit genocide against each other's people during the bloody 1990s wars sparked by the breakup of Yugoslavia.

The International Court of Justice said Serb forces committed widespread crimes in Croatia early in the war, but these did not amount to genocide.

Both countries expressed disappointment that the court had rejected their claims but said it is time to move on.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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*All stats from the 2014 Citizen Satisfaction Survey, prepared for the City of Calgary.

Space tourism. Virgin Galactic turning corner

The only thing interrupting one of New Mexico's most remote stretches of desert is a pristine runway where Virgin Galactic plans one day to launch the world's first commercial space-line.

In the four years since its completion, however, the runway has seen little use: Just promises, year after year, that it would shuttle passengers to the edges of Earth.

Virgin Galactic had proclaimed 2015 was finally going to be the year. That was until its rocket-powered spacecraft broke apart during a test flight last fall, killing one pilot and igniting speculation about the future of commercial space tourism and Spaceport America.

Virgin Galactic CEO George Whitesides said things are on track now and testing will take off again this year. Virgin Galactic's manufacturing crew is about two-thirds done with building a new spacecraft, and the operations team is ramping up for a test-flight program that will serve as one of the last major hurdles to getting off the ground.

Christine Anderson, the head of New Mexico's Spaceport Authority, pointed to the ill-fated Apollo I test launch and the 1986 Challenger explosion as examples of space exploration efforts that resulted in tragedy. Still, astronauts and scientists pushed on — and, she said, those backing Virgin Galactic and Spaceport America are doing the same.

"We have invested $218 million, so there's absolutely no reason to stop now," she said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Christine Anderson, executive director of the New Mexico Spaceport Authority, poses at the end of the taxiway at Spaceport America in Upham, N.M.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Internet. Ohio man pleads guilty to selling fake urine

An Ohio man who sold fake urine and other products meant to help people pass workplace drug tests has pleaded guilty before a federal judge in Pennsylvania.

David Neal, 61, of Middletown, Ohio, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to defraud the United States and introduction of misbranded drugs into interstate commerce. He faces up to six years in prison when he returns to Pittsburgh for sentencing May 13.

U.S. Attorney David Hickton said Neal sold illegal substances online beginning in 2006 through his company, ACS Herbal Tea. Some of the products, including Magnum Unisex Synthetic Urine and Urine Luck, were designed to thwart tests such as those used to screen airline pilots, truck drivers and train engineers, as well as FBI agents.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The city at the heart of Canada's oilsands is no ghost town, but things have slowed down a bit in Fort McMurray, Alta.
THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Oilsands cutbacks hard on contractors

Fort McMurray. City's shadow population who fly in and out on jobs are most affected by the slowdown

Roman Skowroniski would go back home to British Columbia if he thought the job prospects there were any brighter. But, for the time being, the heavy equipment operator will keep trying to make a go of it in "Fort Mac."

Most of the time, Skowroniski is able to land short-term jobs through his union, but he's had little success lately.

Most livelihoods are in one way or another tied to the oilsands in Fort McMurray, Alta. Downtown, after work, overalls and steel-toed boots far outnumber suits and ties.

The impact of crude's sharp slide wasn't readily evident in the city in late January. Most people who live there permanently continue to have steady jobs at mines north of town or at businesses that serve that clientele.

Based on past experience, many Fort Mac denizens see the current situation as temporary.

"In two years it's going to turn around big-time," said Mike Beaulieu, who works at Shell Canada, which has cut some of its oilsands staff.

His colleague, Jaimie Caines, recalls: "(In) 2009 this happened, too, and everyone was worried. It'll blow over eventually."

But Fort McMurray and the surrounding region has a large "shadow population" — 39,271 out of a total population of 116,407, according to the 2012 municipal census. Those folks may officially reside elsewhere in Canada, but fly in and out of site to work for weeks at a time. While on the job, they stay at lodges — many well-appointed with gyms, theatres and other perks — largely bypassing the city itself.

"I think that's the group that's probably been affected the most by any slowdown," said Nick Sanders, president of the local chamber of commerce. "From our perspective, that's a pretty good business decision for the oilsands companies to make. You don't want to start laying off the people in Fort McMurray because they've made that long-term commitment to the community."

Heavyweights such as Suncor Energy Inc. and the Syncrude Canada Ltd. consortium continue to dig up bitumen. But, with crude prices slumping below $50 US a barrel for most of the year, so far expansions and new projects are in question, affecting short-term construction jobs.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jobs

1,000

Suncor Energy has announced a $1-billion reduction in spending and has said it will cut 1,000 positions — mostly contractors.

Investing

Buffett winning bet with hedge fund managers

Warren Buffett's bet — that you're better off investing in a simple fund that tracks a stock index than in sophisticated and costly hedge funds — appears to be safe. Seven years into the 10-year wager, the index fund Buffett picked is trouncing the performance of a collection of hedge funds.

Buffett made the bet in 2008 to demonstrate how hefty fees can hurt investment returns. The Vanguard S&P 500 Admiral index fund Buffett chose is up 63.5 per cent since the bet began. The money managers who own Protege Partners LLC picked five funds that bundle hedge funds. They are up roughly 19.6 per cent.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beverages

Coke looking to milk new category

Coke is coming out with premium milk that has more protein and less sugar. And it's betting people will pay twice as much for Fairlife as Americans turn away from soft drinks and seek a functional boost from their drinks.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 80.67¢ (+1.16¢)

TSX 15,062.77 (+162.30)

OIL $53.05 US (+$3.48)

GOLD $1,260.30 US (-$16.60)

Natural gas: $2.754 US (+7.4¢)
Dow Jones: 17,666.40 (+305.36)

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French pastry chef touts 'essence of the product'

Pascal Rigo talks with Metro News about his new venture with coffee giant Starbucks. Rigo's food aims to marry quality ingredients and mass production, with authenticity as the goal.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD
Metro in Toronto

Meet Pascal Rigo: the pastry evangelist who's coming to Canada determined to put a classic French twist on mass-produced food.

A man of gusto and expressive hand gestures, Rigo will be filling Starbucks stores in Ontario and British Columbia with his La Boulange French pastries and sandwiches, starting March 3. The rest of the country will see his croissants in cafés by July.

He wants to disprove the common theory that fast food is low in quality. He likes the words "pure" and "simple" and fawns particularly over his ingredients.

In a $100-million deal, Rigo went from serving 16,000 people at 20 San Francisco cafés to entering the lives of 45 million people a week after his company was bought by Starbucks in 2012.

"What can we do that's really, really good, and how can we share it with as many people as possible?" he said, with boundless energy in his voice and his eyebrows up to his hairline.

The solution, he said, was found in freezers.

His croissants, danishes and scones — already available in U.S. stores — are frozen the moment they come out of industrial ovens, individually wrapped and put in cartridges for transport and storage until they're sold.

"We capture the essence of the product at the end of baking and we seal it," he said.

Rigo hesitated to criticize the current Starbucks pastry lineup but he did note that, compared to his creation, the existing croissant "just doesn't smell like butter."

Starbucks has made a "substantial investment" by putting freezers in all of its cafés to store the pastries, a spokesperson said.

The pastries take 15 seconds to warm up ("and wake up the butter") — about the time it takes to make a latte — and sell for a slightly higher price than the current product line, averaging about $2.45.

Pascal Rigo DAVID VAN DYKE/METRO

As for the prospect of competing with Tim Hortons, Rigo seemed unperturbed.

"I was not sure how nice the baby will look," he quipped of the recent merger between Tim Hortons and Burger King.

The corner bakery and French grandmothers are his real competition, he said.

Quoted

"There are good cronuts and bad cronuts. I think you can invent everything in the world, but you have to start somewhere, and for us it's the ingredients."

Pascal Rigo, when asked about the value of pastry trends

To pull it off, he's building a network of smaller producers — B.C. blueberries, California almonds and Oregano peppermint — eschewing another well-held notion that local is best.

"It could be local and crap," he said with characteristic French frankness.

Starbucks won't be offering all the same products in every store, either. It's selling pastrami sandwiches in New York City and goat cheese-and-zucchini croissants in San Francisco.

Not even all croissants will taste the same coast to coast, Rigo said, warning that perfection isn't the goal — authenticity is.

All that from a man also keen to push the idea that mechanization is not innately bad, even for a foodie.

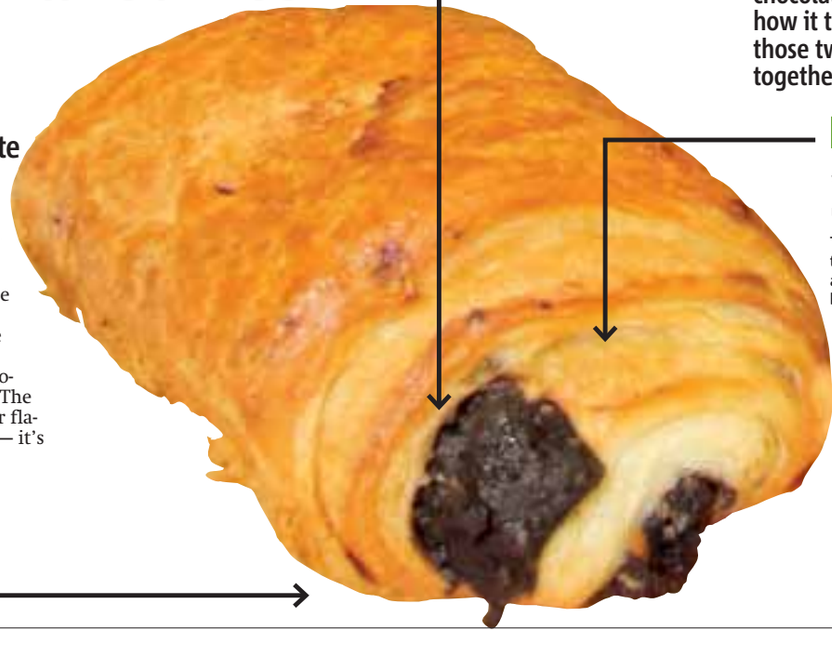
"The machine is fine; it's what you feed the machine with," he said.

In a world where prepacked and processed foods reign, it's a big mission for a man who began baking as a child in the small village of Paillet, France, before moving to the U.S., building a popular café franchise and selling it to the biggest name in coffee for many millions.

"I asked for way more than that," he said, laughing. "You've got to start high."

The French bakers he learned from would no doubt agree: Rigo's artisan-for-all mission is a lofty one.

Anatomy of a pastry favourite



Chocolate croissant

Choosing a favourite is no easy feat

Asking Pascal Rigo to choose which pastry you should try first is like asking him to "choose between my children," he said.

But when pushed, the chocolate croissant won.

"It's an amazing chocolate croissant," he said. "The crunchiness of the butter flavour, or how warm it is — it's the authenticity."

All about chocolate

"When you eat it, think about the single-origin chocolate from Colombia, how it travelled and how those two things met together." Pascal Rigo

Layers of butter

24

The croissant has the flaky structure that comes from the proper 24 layers of all-butter dough and is baked to a golden-brown colour, Rigo noted.

Coffee or tea

Pair it with a drink

When it comes to pairing the chocolate croissant with a beverage, Rigo suggests Caffé Verona, Guatemala Antigua, Espresso Roast, Ethiopia or a Teavana Shaken Iced Black Tea.

DAVID VAN DYKE/METRO

Appeal to women

Menus to feature wine, beer and tapas

Starbucks baristas: make room for bartenders — and a carbonation station for teas and juices.

An evening menu of wine, beer and tapas will be launched at the coffee chain's locations in Canada's big cities by the end of the year, Starbucks Canada president Rossann Williams told Torstar News Service.

She said the company's aim is to appeal to women, who make up 60 per cent of Starbucks' customers and don't necessarily like to hang out in bars with their friends.

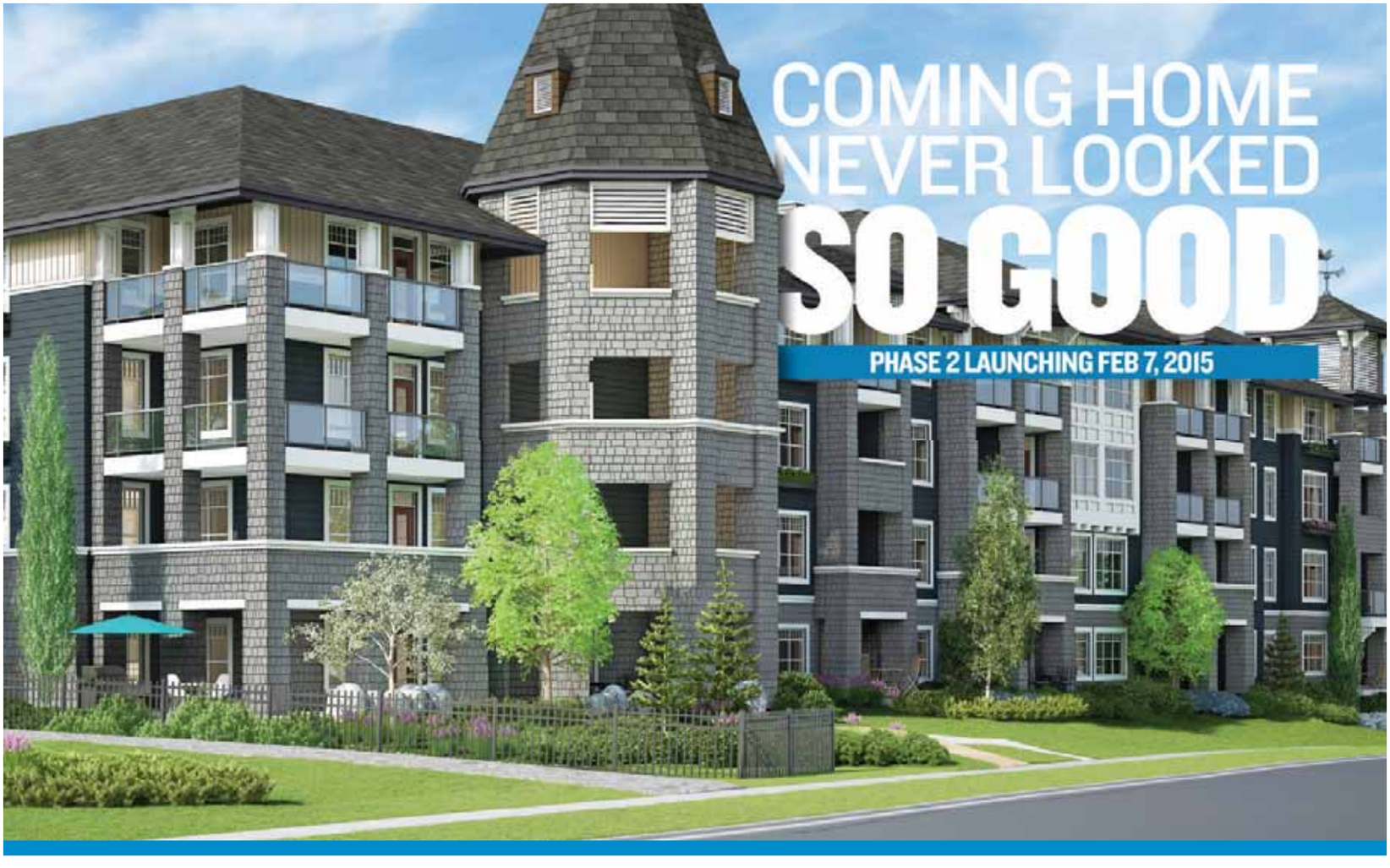
With coffee sales flat, the 44-year-old java giant is pushing into different areas as it faces stiff competition from fast-food chains serving coffee along with independent coffee chains popping up everywhere.

Williams said she expects new food options from French pastry chef Pascal Rigo, in particular, to be a big driver of sales and traffic for the chain.

"Millennial customers like quality," said Williams, who said her aim is to attract the next generation. "They have to make big changes, just like Tim Hortons did six or seven years ago when it started expanding its food menu," said Robert Carter, executive director of food service at NPD Group.

He said that with fast-food restaurant growth projected to slow down to one per cent over the next five years in Canada, there is "real room for Starbucks to steal customers" from Tims especially, which has a dominant 42-per-cent market share in fast food. Starbucks is stuck in fifth place in the so-called quick service restaurant business, he noted. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Rossann Williams, new president of Starbucks Canada
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



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Gossip

NED EHRBAR

METRO'S TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Lindsay Lohan ALL PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

Lohans sue Fox for crack about Dina doing coke with Lilo

Be careful what you say about Lindsay Lohan, because apparently the perennially troubled actress is looking to keep her lawyers busy with something other than her probation hearings.

Lohan and her mother, Dina, are suing Fox News, Sean Hannity, and Michelle Fields for comments made during a Hannity episode exactly a year ago about the mother-daughter duo doing cocaine together, according to TMZ.

Their main complaint is that while Fox issued an apology, the video clip in question — from a segment about stars who could suffer similar fates to Philip Seymour Hoffman, in which Fields states, "Lindsay's mom is doing cocaine with her" — was not removed from the web, despite a request that Fox do so.

It's tough to decide who to root for in this one.

Boy Next Door Guzman's naked ambition on display

Ryan Guzman

Sure The Boy Next Door did some respectable business at the box office, but if you're the non-J.Lo star of the film, your first concern should be keeping that fame game momentum going, right?

And Ryan Guzman knows just how to do that: Get naked.

The young actor posed nude — save for some carefully draped sheets — for Cosmopolitan U.K.'s March issue to raise awareness for Cancer Research U.K., because sure.

And just to make sure you feel weird about any dirty thoughts, he peppers the spread with some personal tragedy: "I lost my grandfather to cancer when I was 13," Guzman tells the magazine. "It's affected my life and I'll do everything I can to back cancer research." And he does apparently mean everything.

Robin's widow and his kids go to court over estate

Efforts to settle Robin Williams' estate are getting messy, as his wife, Susan Schneider, is suing the late comedian's three children from previous marriages for removing items from the home she and Williams shared without her permission. But Williams' kids are countersuing, claiming Schneider is "adding insult to a terrible injury," according to the Associated Press. "The Williams children are heartbroken that (Schneider), Mr. Williams' wife of less than three years, has acted against his wishes by challenging the plans so carefully made for his estate," their attorney says in the filing.

Robin Williams and his wife Susan Schneider

2 SCENE

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New Harper Lee novel features Scout as adult

Publishing. To Kill a Mockingbird author will release first work in more than 50 years

Harper Lee, shown in a 2007 file photo, will release Go Set a Watchman on July 14. The book is essentially a sequel to To Kill a Mockingbird, although it was finished earlier. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

To Kill a Mockingbird will not be Harper Lee's only published book after all. Publisher Harper announced Tuesday that Go Set a Watchman, a novel the Pulitzer Prize-winning author completed in the 1950s and put aside, will be released July 14.

Rediscovered last fall, Go Set a Watchman is essentially a sequel to To Kill a Mockingbird, although it was finished earlier. The 304-page book will be Lee's second, and the first published work in more than 50 years. The publisher plans a first printing of two million copies.

"In the mid-1950s, I completed a novel called Go Set a Watchman," the 88-year-old Lee said in a statement issued by Harper. "It features the character known as Scout as an adult woman, and I thought it a pretty decent effort. My editor, who was taken by the flashbacks to Scout's childhood, persuaded me to write a novel (what became To Kill a Mockingbird) from the point of view of the young Scout.

"I was a first-time writer, so I did as I was told. I hadn't realized it (the original book) had survived, so was surprised and delighted when my dear friend and lawyer Tonja Carter discovered it. After much thought and hesitation, I shared it with a handful of people I trust and was pleased to hear that they considered it worthy of publication. I am humbled and amazed that this will now be published after all these years."

Quoted

"I hadn't realized the (original book) had survived, so was surprised and delighted when my dear friend and lawyer Tonja Carter discovered it."

Author Harper Lee

Financial terms were not disclosed. The deal was negotiated between Carter and the head of Harper's parent company, Michael Morrison of HarperCollins Publishers.

According to publisher Harper, Carter came upon the manuscript at a "secure location where it had been affixed to an original typescript of To Kill a Mockingbird." The new book is set in Lee's famed Maycomb, Ala., during the mid-1950s, 20 years after To Kill a Mockingbird and roughly contemporaneous with the time that Lee was writing the story. The civil rights movement was taking hold in her home state. The Supreme Court had ruled unanimously in 1954 that segregated schools were unconstitutional, and the arrest of Rosa Parks in 1955 led to the yearlong Montgomery bus boycott.

"Scout (Jean Louise Finch) has returned to Maycomb from New York to visit her father, Atticus," the publisher's announcement reads. "She is forced to grapple with issues both personal and political as she tries to understand her father's attitude toward society, and her own feelings about the place where she was born and spent her childhood." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Show development

OWN to adapt Queen Sugar as drama series

Oprah Winfrey and the director of the Oscar-nominated movie Selma are creating a drama series for Winfrey's TV channel. The project from Winfrey and filmmaker Ava DuVernay is inspired by the Natalie Baszile novel Queen Sugar, the OWN channel said.

Winfrey will serve as executive producer and will play a recurring role, the network said. DuVernay will write, direct and executive produce the drama, her first TV series.

Former talk show queen Winfrey has increased her presence on OWN's non-scripted programs help steady the channel after its rocky start. The new drama will mark her acting debut on OWN after several big-screen projects and network TV movies.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Oprah GETTY IMAGES

How-to

Achieve travel exit velocity

1. Adopt the mindset that 'you can do it' rather than mentally shutting down your travel dream once you envision it.
2. Pick the best time of year to visit your destination, then assign it a month (and a year)
3. Buy the flights as soon as you are able, so that when travel time comes, they are paid off. (Can you use credit card points?)
4. Start a fund meant only for the trip, and set a weekly or monthly contribution goal.
5. Contribute all the extra funds you can: dividend, work bonus, piggy bank, $10 lottery ticket win — everything.
6. Research to find discount accommodation options (family-run B&Bs, hostels) so you can splurge elsewhere. DOUG WALLACE/METRO

New

La Reserve Paris Hotel and Spa

Occupying a mansion previously owned by French fashion designer Pierre Cardin, La Reserve Paris is a new 26-suite, 14-room gem off the Champs-Élysées on Avenue Gabriel. Facilities include a courtyard, library, spa and French restaurant, Le Gabriel. Belle Époque luxury is alive and well, with period furniture, luxe fabrics and regal colours. Go see how the other half lives. From $1,050. Visit lareserve-paris.com.
DOUG WALLACE/METRO, PHOTO: LA RESERVE PARIS

Deal

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DOUG WALLACE/METRO

Climbing peaks and dunes

The Southwest. This spring lace up your hiking shoes and head to Arizona and Texas for some challenging and scenic trails

In seven parks from Phoenix, Ariz., to near El Paso, Texas, you can wander across blindingly white sand dunes, climb on all fours over red boulders, trek to waterfalls deep inside a canyon, and play rockhound for a day. Here are some highlights not to miss this spring.

Saguaro Forests

Two-storey-high saguaros, ocotillo bushes tipped with scarlet blooms and blossoming palo verde trees border the steeply rising switchbacks on the first two kilometres of the Hugh Norris Trail in the western district of Saguaro National Park.

At the ridge top, falcons soar as dusk settles onto one of the densest concentrations of saguaros in the Sonoran desert, many more than a century old. In the distance stands Signal Hill, where the Hohokam people carved petroglyphs hundreds of years ago.

Although Tucson bisects the park's two districts, silence on the trail is unbroken.

Hikers descend a steep portion of the Camelback Mountain trail.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canyon swim

Deep inside Bear Canyon, seven waterfalls gurgled amid rocky walls studded with cactus. This 13-kilometre round-trip hike in Sabino Canyon Recreation Area, just north of Tucson, is a parade of Southwest wilderness bests: saguaro stands silhouetted against mountain peaks, a cottonwood-lined river gorge, and chilly rock pools, perfect for dipping battered feet.

Rocks all around

Follow I-10 east more than 160 kilometres from Tucson, across desert so wide that the mountains look like they're hanging off a round horizon, like a child's drawing of the Earth. Then head toward the border to either Rock Hound State Park, in Deming, N.M., or Chiricahua National Monument, Ariz.

The park allows visitors to collect up to 15 pounds. The nearby Red Roof Rock Shop can saw them in two — $3 for a half-hour of work — to reveal gorgeous sparkling blue agate nestled against pale violet rhyolite, a type of rock known as a thunderegg.

At Chiricahua, a "sky island" mountain range emerges from the emptiness, its dense formations of eroded volcanic ash spires millions of years old stand like turrets on a sand castle. Starting from Massai Point, 2,094 metres high above the desert, hike down to Echo Canyon Grotto, amid pines and improbably perched rocks that seem ready for a Wile E. Coyote's push.

Endless white sand dunes stretch across the horizon at White Sands National Monument in New Mexico. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

If you go ...

- **Picacho Peak State Park.** azstateparks.com/Parks/PIPE/
- **Saguaro National Park.** nps.gov/sagu
- **Bear Canyon Trail.** In Sabino Canyon, about 22 kilometres from Tucson, Ariz.
- **Rock Hound State Park.** Near Deming, New Mexico, about 160 kilometres from El Paso, Texas

Snowy sand

Strolling from bright marker to marker across white dunes, the wind obliterates your footprints like you are in a blizzard. But a few tall, spiky yucca plants sprouting from the gypsum sand signalled that this was desert, part of 713 square kilometres of constantly shifting dunes at White Sands National Monument. The remote area sits in the middle of a missile range in southern New Mexico.

Crawling up camelback

One of the most iconic Southwest hikes is smack in the middle of metro Phoenix.

The experience of clambering up the 824-metre Camelback Mountain starts with fighting for a parking spot and ends with the rush of bagging a genuine peak. Hikers use metal handrails in spots to pull themselves up the red rocks, which resemble the face and hump of a camel.

When you aren't climbing on all fours, take in the 360-degree views of distant mountain ranges and closer golf courses and pools, framed by tall saguaros, blooming and fragrant creosote, and orange poppy buds.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

From one side of America to the other

The Norwegian Sun is one of many ships that sail through the Panama Canal. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Panama Canal. This Central American marvel of engineering adds a fascinating element to a cruise

Nina and Fred Fenton have gone on 40 cruises, including five through the Panama Canal since 1998, but they keep coming back.

While aboard the Norwegian Sun on their latest journey into the storied waterway linking two great oceans, the retired couple from Lincoln, Calif., mused at the simple — yet efficient — workings of the century-old engineering wonder.

"This is a true marvel," said Nina Fenton. "It's amazing how they were able to do what they did back when it was built, and it is still functional today," added Fred Fenton.

The Fentons' most recent journey through the Panama Canal was 15-day cruise from Los Angeles to Tampa, Fla., last year. On one sunny fall morning, throngs of passengers leaned on deck railings to watch as the ship slowly edged into a series of canal locks lifting it 26 metres above sea level for entry on the Pacific side and lowered it the same amount as it sailed into the Caribbean Sea at late afternoon.

Twenty-six million gallons of water can flow into a lock in just eight minutes. Gravity fills the locks with water from Miraflores and Gatun lakes, which are located on the continental divide between the locks in this 77-kilometre isthmus.

Electric locomotives attach cables on both sides of ships to ensure they are centred while slowly motoring on their own power through each lock.

"It's a fantastic experience," said Ronny Borg, captain of the Norwegian Sun. "I never get tired of it, and I've been through the canal maybe 20 times."

Borg said the shortcut between oceans, which cost Norwegian Sun a $379,000 transit fee on this trip, saves ships three to four weeks that otherwise would be spent going around the southern tip of South America. As a bonus for passengers, the day-long journey through the Panama Canal is truly fascinating.

"It's amazing that this whole system was envisioned and built more than a century ago and is still working well," said cruise passenger Roger Mathison of Sioux Falls, S.D.

Mathison and his wife, Pat, spent the day taking dozens of canal passage photos from various decks and playing cards near a cafeteria window that offered an excellent view. At one point, they even saw a large crocodile in the water.

Wide load

- The Norwegian Sun is one of the largest boats that can transit the canal, measuring 32 metres at its widest point.

Most major cruise lines and some smaller ones offer lengthy Panama Canal trips from one U.S. coast to the other, primarily in the drier September-April period. Ships on shorter cruises go into the canal, turn around and return to their ports of origin.

As this cruise ship carefully nudged through the locks, passengers had a bird's-eye view of other in-transit vessels in the next lane.

The daylong journey also offered a glimpse of the massive construction project that will add an adjacent third lane of canal traffic, allowing even larger ships to use the shortcut in the future.

Existing locks are 305 metres long, 34 metres wide and 14 metres deep. The new ones will be 427 metres long, 55 metres wide and 18 metres deep. A Panama Canal Authority spokesman said the project should be completed by 2016. Construction of the existing canal was finished on Aug. 15, 1914.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Cruise ships are getting on board these new trends

Perks. Better deals, solo traveller offerings and more reliable Internet are all coming

Is more reliable Internet really a good thing when you're on vacation? ISTOCK

In 2015, Norway and Australia will become popular cruising destinations while the industry will cater to solo travellers by eliminating the traditional single supplement that penalizes those who cruise alone.

These are among some of the trends predicted to define the cruising industry in 2015 by experts at Cruise Critic, which calls itself the world's largest online cruise resource.

Editor-in-chief Carolyn Spencer Brown says the cruise industry is beginning to model itself after the traditional land resort, in which guests pay a base rate for their room and can tack add-ons to their vacation package. Here are trends expected to make waves in the industry in 2015:

Add-ons

Standard cruise vacations are being enriched with creative add-ons like unique dining experiences, land excursions and private lessons to build more personalized experiences for cruisers. Crystal Cruises, for instance, has created a half-day excursion for Game of Thrones fans taking guests to key locations in Northern Ireland.

Year-round deals

While January-March has traditionally been the high season for scoring cruise deals, expect to see deals outside the sale period.

Internet

Recently, Carnival Corporation announced that it had found a way to bring high-speed Internet to its ships thanks to a hybrid network that taps into land, air and sea.

Solo travellers

Cruise lines are recognizing that solo travellers make up a coveted market with disposable income to spend. Expect more cruise lines to build packages to cater to the single traveller, either by eliminating the traditional single supplement, or by creating special lounges for the singles onboard.

AFP

Beyond the beach

Thrill-seekers travelling to the Dominican Republic have many options from which to choose. CONTRIBUTED

Dominican Republic. A great spot for eco-tourists looking for adventure

VAWN HIMMELSBACH
For Metro

The Dominican Republic is known for its pristine beaches and average annual temperature of 25 C. And its most popular destination, Punta Cana, has been master-planned with vacationers in mind.

While Punta Cana is home to luxury all-inclusives and boutique hotels with colonial charm, there is plenty of action off the resort.

The DR has partnered with the likes of The Nature Conservancy, The Smithsonian and the United Nations to create environmental protections, and much of its coastal areas are protected as national parks and reserves — so it's a great spot for eco-tourists looking to pursue adventure while preserving sensitive ecosystems.

Each winter, some 3,000 to 5,000 whales migrate to Samaná Bay — one of the first whale sanctuaries in the world. Whale-watching tours offer a chance to see humpback whales, which can grow up to 15 metres in length, from January to March.

On land, head to the Indigenous Eyes Ecological Preserve, a private forest reserve where you can take a dip in one of 12 freshwater lagoons the Taino Indians call "eyes," which are believed to hold medicinal properties.

A new highway is also making it easier — and much faster — to reach other destinations on the island.

"You can take advantage of visiting more than one destination when you choose to go to Punta Cana," said Cosette Garcia, director of tourism for the Dominican Republic in Canada.

"I know how Canadians love to mingle with the locals, so they have that option."

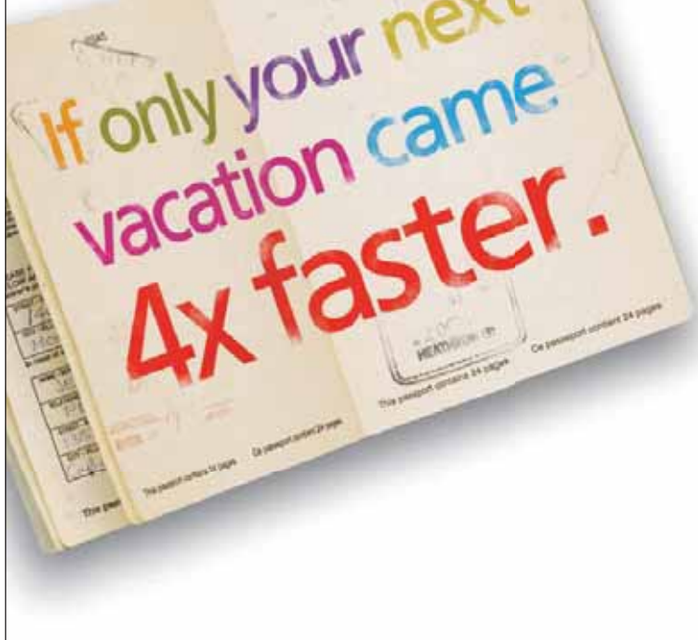
If it's culture you seek, head to nearby Santo Domingo, one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the Caribbean. This UNESCO World Heritage Site — where Christopher Columbus first set foot in 1492 — is easily walkable, with colonial architecture, cobblestone lanes and iron street lamps.

No trip to the DR is complete without sun and sand, and Punta Cana's Bavaro Beach is rated one of the world's top 10 beaches (according to UNESCO). With a coral reef that protects the beach from big waves, it's ideal for swimming and safe for kids.

If it's culture you seek, head to nearby Santo Domingo, one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the Caribbean. CONTRIBUTED

Day and night

- For thrill-seekers, Bavaro Adventure Park offers 1,100 acres of open-air adventure, from ziplining to "crazy ball zorbing" and "crazy jumper bungee trampolines." Or head to Dolphin Island Park, where you can swim with dolphins and sea lions in their natural habitat.
- Dance the night away at Imagine, a disco built into a cave. Be sure to sample the local beer, Presidente. Or try the popular Brugal rum, which is produced in the DR and uses traditional rum-making methods. But take it easy — it's strong stuff.



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Bucket list

Eat your way around Wales

Unspoiled, unhurried and underrated, Wales is one locavore taste sensation after another, one of the earliest champions of simpler food traditions. After you've toured Cardiff, jump in a rental and head to Llanerch Vineyard Cookery School, voted one of the top 10 in the U.K., where Welsh food legend Angela Gray presides over the kitchens. Then, going east to Reynoldston, stop at the Fairyhill Hotel & Restaurant, an eight-room haven that dates back to the 1720s, where the kitchen bends over backward to make the best use of regional food. And if you have time for a trip up north, a true food adventure can be found at Ynyshir Hall, a stately inn near Machynlleth in Powys. While on the road, watch for signs of all the little food fairs during the spring and summer, teeming with amazing cheese, chocolate, cider and meats. Bring stretchy pants.

DOUG WALLACE/METRO

Break the winter blahs with a trip to Carnaval

Quebec City. This classic frigid fest is the perfect reason to bundle up and head outside

ON THE MOVE
Loren Christie
life@metronews.ca

For anyone looking to embrace our Canadian winter, there is no better place than Quebec City.

Quebec's Carnaval encourages everyone to bundle up and make the most of the outdoors. This past weekend I visited the city with six friends, in time for the world-famous winter festival's opening weekend. Despite -20 C temperatures, people came out to try their hand at dog sledding, snow biking and grab a photo with Bonhomme, the festival's omnipresent mascot. Most activities take place just outside the old city walls on the Plains of Abraham and are geared toward families. That didn't stop our gang of winter adventurers from taking part in tube and toboggan races. When a diversion from romping in the snow is required, there are a number of pop-up ice bars and wooden shacks ready to serve up a coffee with Amarula or a glass of Caribou, Quebec's version of hot mulled wine. The festival runs till Feb. 15 this year.

The Hotel de Glace is North America's only ice hotel. PETER REMUS

Away from the Carnaval sites, an afternoon stroll of the historic streets of Vieux Québec and La Place Royale, with its shops, restaurants and tiered, narrow streets are a must.

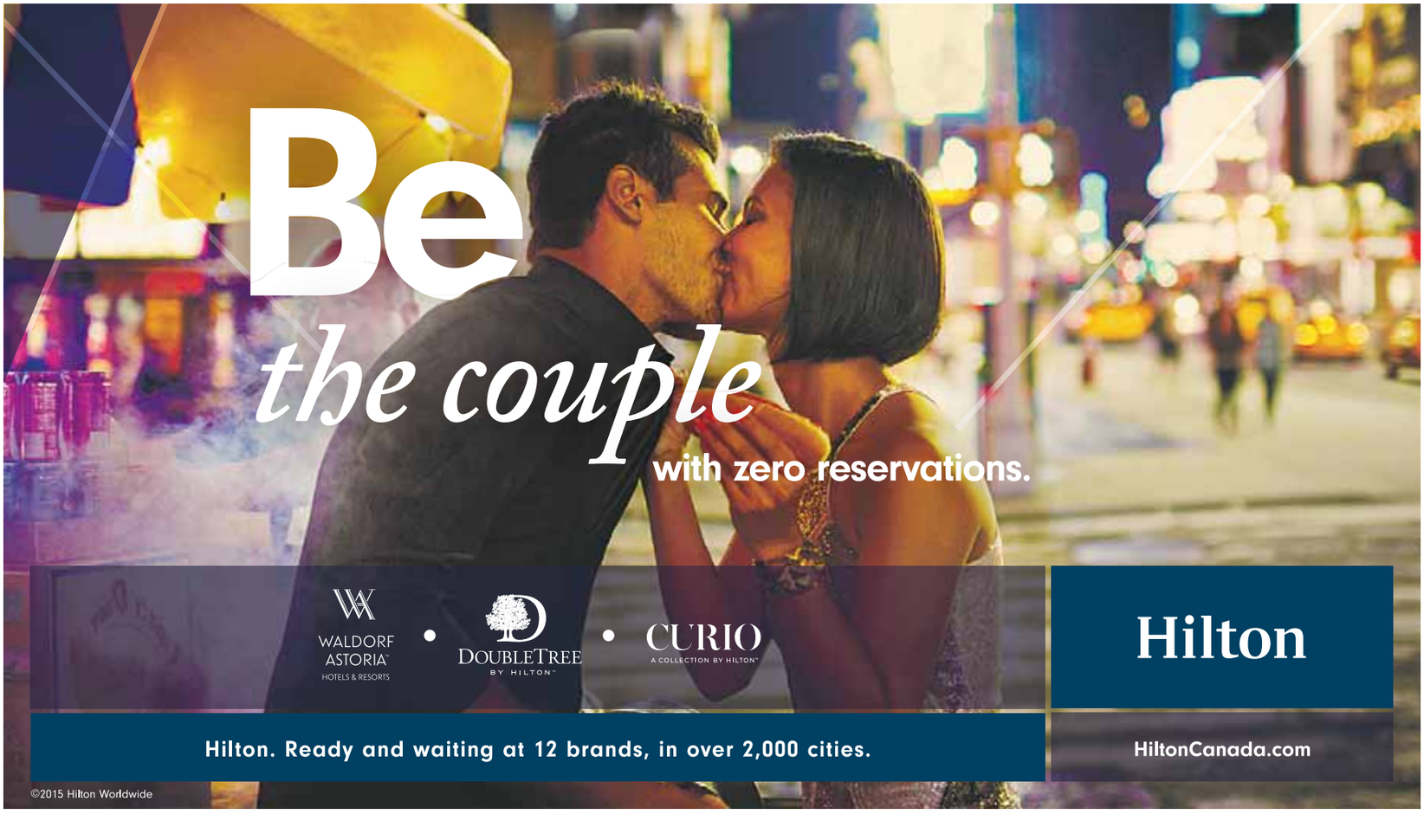
Reminiscent of a European village, this UNESCO-protected World Heritage area is even more charming when covered in powdery white snow and lit with twinkling lights than when canopied by summer's leafy greens.

Escaping the winter temperatures provides a guilt-free reason to add frequent stops for meals and libations, whether it be an artisanal coffee or a local craft beer.

For dinner, my travelling companions successfully used Trip Advisor as our guide; Chez Boulay and recently opened Légende are both charming restaurants with contemporary menus that pride themselves on their modern Quebec fare. The unexpected gem for us was Bati Bassak, a delicious and reasonably priced Thai and Cambodian restaurant where you could bring your own wine.

There are a number of hotels that are well positioned to make exploring the city easy. However, spending a night at the Hôtel de Glace, located 15 minutes from the downtown core, is a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

North America's only ice hotel is a 44-room hotel, complete with Chapel, Bar and Arctic Spa, made completely out of snow and ice. I am glad I paid attention to the sleeping instructions they sent; at a brisk -32 C, there was no room for error.



Effortless meal that defines sophistication

Dinner. Stuffed Turkey Rolls with Pasta Sauce take only half an hour to make but are fancy enough to serve up at your next dinner party

DINNER EXPRESS
Emily Richards
food@metronews.ca

FLASH FOOD

From your fridge to your table in 30 minutes or less

This recipe serves four to six. ONTARIO TURKEY

Growing up in an Italian family, I have always enjoyed scallopini.

With the great variety on the market, choosing lean turkey scallopini is an easy way to add a fancy factor to your meal routine.

I developed this recipe based on the version my Nonna made when I was growing up. It's easy to put together with big garlic and herb flavour.

Using lean turkey breast scallopini allows you to cook it quickly to enjoy right away or pack away for an awesome lunch tomorrow!

A simple Italian filling of garlic, parsley and cheese fills the turkey scallopini to add flavour to the pasta sauce and makes a homey winter meal.

The pasta sauce aroma filling the kitchen will have your family running to the table.

Be sure to have a chunk of Parmesan to sprinkle over top of the pasta before serving.

Directions

1. Lay scallopini out on work surface. Sprinkle them with pepper and half of the salt.

2. Divide garlic, parsley and cheese between scallopini. Roll up each one and secure with a toothpick or kitchen string.

3. In a deep skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Brown turkey rolls, remove to a plate.

4. Return skillet to medium heat and cook shallots, oregano and hot pepper flakes for 3 minutes or until softened. Add passata, parsley, basil and remaining salt; bring to a simmer. Add turkey rolls and any accumulated juices. Cover and simmer for about 15 minutes or until turkey is tender and no longer pink inside.

5. Meanwhile, in pot of boiling salted water, cook pasta for about 8 minutes or until tender but firm. Drain well and return to pot.

6. Remove turkey rolls from sauce and pour sauce over pasta and toss to combine. Serve with rolls.

Ingredients

- 1 lb (500 g) turkey breast scallopini
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) ground pepper
- 1 tsp (5 mL) salt, divided
- 8 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) chopped fresh parsley
- 1/3 cup (75 ml) fresh grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) extra virgin olive oil
- 2 shallots, finely chopped
- 1 tsp (5 ml) dried oregano leaves
- 1/4 tsp (1 ml) hot pepper flakes
- 1 jar (660 ml) tomato passata
- 2 sprigs fresh parsley
- 1 sprig fresh basil
- 1 pkg (375 g) whole wheat or gluten free penne pasta

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RIANA TOPAN
TalentEgg.ca

For storing and sharing files

When you need to store or share particularly large files (think photos, videos, presentations and artwork), try Google Drive. Though you need a Google account to set up your own drive, you can upload and share files with anyone regardless of whether or not they have an account. You can set up folders to organize your documents and decide who you want to give access to. The app is especially helpful for working on group projects, since you can all work off of the same document simultaneously.

For emails

We all feel inundated by emails at one time or another. Mailbox is highly recommended by many for helping you to deal with emails easily. The app allows users to quickly swipe messages to move them into a different folder, and actually learns from your actions to automate your most common ones. Plus, you can hit the snooze button to temporarily dismiss emails that aren't very important in the moment. An email app like Mailbox can help you to quickly clean out your inbox, eliminating the anxiety that often accompanies a slow but steady rise in the number of new messages sitting in your inbox.

For scheduling

Cal, an app available on both iPhones and Android devices, is both fun and functional. It works as an agenda and event planner and will sync with an existing Any.DO task list. It will also remind you about friend's birthdays and looks nice to boot. Having a schedule with all of your events, meetings and deadlines in one place is extremely helpful for helping to you manage your time well. You'll start each day off with a fresh list of your scheduled activities, ensuring that you don't forget about an important appointment until the last minute.

For note taking

Evernote is one of the most popular apps out there for taking, organizing and sharing notes. Users like this free app because it allows you to jot down notes of any length, categorize them by topic, add photos and attachments and easily find notes you've already written. Plus, it syncs your work across all of your devices so you never have to worry about not having access to your files whenever you need them. If you're constantly jotting things down on scraps of paper and end up scrambling to find them, Evernote may be just what you need.

For work/life balance

All work and no play is never a good idea. A great app for ensuring that you're making time for important things outside of work is Balanced. This app allows you to pick which activities you want to prioritize and set reminders for how often you want to complete them (like exercising, seeing friends and working on hobbies). It's a useful tool for reminding you to be more mindful and motivating you to achieve your personal goals. Not only do apps like Balanced encourage you to take control of what's important to you, they also help you to become happier and more fulfilled.

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LAUREN MARINIGH
TalentEgg.ca

You don't necessarily have to be decked out in a suit in order to be considered a working professional. ISTOCK

Starting at a new job always raises a lot of questions — one of the most questions being: "What on earth do I wear?"

Most of the time, the human resources manager can let you know the dress code in advance, but it might be hard to know which outfits in your closet fall under the target category. What is the difference between business casual and business formal? What is too casual for work? Don't worry — we have the answers to your fashion woes below.

Casual

Step aside, Casual Fridays.

The casual dress code is getting more and more popular today. It's most prevalent in smaller companies, often with a younger demographic. If your workplace has a casual dress code, the outfits already sitting in your closet will most likely suffice.

But while casual can mean comfort, there are still standards and restrictions for what you can and can't wear in this category. Pants or jeans without holes work well, as well as most shirts that cover the shoulders (no tank tops!). Be sure you have a few go-to pieces: relaxed button up-shirts or blouses are great choices.

Business Casual

This dress code is probably the most confusing to understand. How exactly do you combine business and casual, and how do you make sure you're neither over- nor underdressed?

Business casual usually means that your employer wants a more laidback environment, but still want s everyone to look professional and put together.

For bottoms, khakis, corduroy, or dress pants are usually what fall into business casual. Button-up collared shirts can be worn without a tie, and golf shirts are usually allowed in the warmer months. For sweaters, make sure they fall under a cardigan category as opposed to casual. The best part of business casual is there are probably a lot of clothes you currently own that you can dress up to be work appropriate.

Formal

Formal is the strictest dress code, and each workplace will enforce a different set of rules regarding it.

When it comes to a formal or professional dress code, think about what you would have worn for the interview. This is often the case for an office environment that deals heavily with clients: It's very important to maintain a professional image at all times.

Home Matters

Looking for skilled professionals to help your home? Does it need a little TLC? Time to tackle that project in your house that has been bugging your for too long but you're not sure where to go for help? Look no further! Below is a list or local qualified outlets looking to help you out.

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SPORTS 4

Flames own third period

NHL. Calgary earning reputation as strong finishers, lead the league with 66 goals in the final 20 minutes of regulation

No other team in the NHL has scored more goals in the third period or won as many games trailing after two periods than the Calgary Flames. Calgary's scoring and goals-against in first periods rank in the bottom third of the 30 teams.

Playing to a crescendo keeps fans in their Scotiabank Saddledome seats to the final buzzer and likely limits the channel-surfing of those watching at home.

Peaking in the third hasn't hurt Calgary's playoff chances either as the Flames (28-20-3) ranked third in the Pacific Division and seventh in the Western Conference on Tuesday. The Flames trail the San Jose Sharks by two points and are at home to their division rival Wednesday.

With just over a third of the regular season to go, Calgary's third-period reputation is well known to other teams yet the Flames remain effective at late-game pushes.

"We never feel out of games," forward Josh Jooris said Tuesday.

A recent example came Saturday; they trailed the Edmonton Oilers by two heading into the third period, before exploding for four goals. The Flames were up 2-1 on Winnipeg after two Monday and salted the 5-2 win away with two and an empty-netter in the third.

Calgary's 66 third-period goals were the most by any team in any period as of Tuesday. The Flames have won nine when trailing after two, which was two better than the division-leading Anaheim Ducks.

The Flames aren't a big, strong team, but they are nimble, fast and fit. As an opposing team's gas tank starts to drain in the third, or if they play conservatively to protect a lead, Calgary can dictate the pace with their counter-attack and ability to close gaps quickly.

"We're a well-conditioned team and I think that has something to do with it for sure," defenceman Kris Russell said.

"I feel like there have been times where we've been able to outskate teams in the third period. At the same time, if you're up one, there's a tendency to sit back a bit. We've done it too when we've had the lead. I think when we've been down, we've taken advantage of teams kind of sitting back." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"Maybe we're the cardiac kids, but at the same time, it's not part of the plan."

Flames head coach Bob Hartley

Lance Bouma had two of the Flames' four third-period goals in a 4-2 win over the Oilers at the Scotiabank Saddledome on Saturday night. JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bouma playing well beyond projections

THE HOCKEY NEWS
Brian Costello
calgary@metronews.ca

Even at the height of his popularity last season, I never figured Lance Bouma for anything more than a fourth-line crash-and-bang winger in the NHL. And I've been a fan of Bouma's since his junior days.

Now with eight goals and 20 points in 49 games (that's a prorated 13 goals and 33 points for the season), Bouma is getting lots of action among the top nine forwards in Calgary and not looking out of place.

Bouma was a third-round pick in the 2008 draft that produced T.J. Brodie in the fourth round. (By now, that makes up for Darryl Sutter taking Greg Nemisz in the first round and Mitch Wahl in the second.) Bouma was a Western Hockey League bruiser for a Vancouver Giants team that included Evander Kane and Brendan Gallagher. In his final season, the Provost, Alta., native maxed out at 14 goals and 43 points. It was his 134 penalty minutes and black-and-blue style that translated to fourth-line duty in the NHL.

From the beginning, it was hard not to like Bouma's style. He worked hard, skated hard, blocked shots, played in the dirty areas and did it again the next shift. Just the type of player you need on the fourth line. He had just one goal in his first 43 NHL games. In his next 43 games, he added two more goals.

And all the while, he never stopped trying. He missed most of 2012-13 with a serious knee injury that required two surgeries. That didn't deter Bouma from changing his style. Realizing his best chance to become an NHL regular was to continue playing with reckless abandon, Bouma reminded me of former Flame Rich Kromm.

Kromm played three seasons with Calgary in the mid-1980s and missed more than 50 games thanks largely to a physical style that always saw him skating full speed into corners for loose pucks and crashing up and down the walls. Even though he had a 20-goal, 50-point season for the Flames, Kromm always seemed like the player who wouldn't have a long career because he revved the engines so much.

The two best things about Bouma's season is he's producing to unanticipated levels and avoided injury — he's among league leaders in blocked shots. The Hockey News' Ultimate Fantasy Pool Guide projected Bouma for 13 points, a total he met Jan. 9. He's had seven points of gravy since and there's evidently more to come.

Analytic stats

The following are the Flames' leaders this season in goals per 60 minutes of ice time in 5-on-5 situations. The league leader is Rick Nash of the New York Rangers at 2.09.

- Mason Raymond, 1.19
- Lance Bouma, 0.90
- Mikael Backlund, 0.85
- Jiri Hudler, 0.84
- David Jones, 0.83
- Sean Monahan, 0.73
- Johnny Gaudreau, 0.72

Stamps extend Bennett's deal

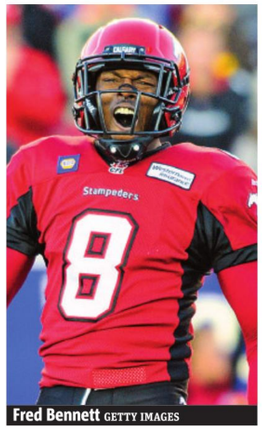
CFL. Defensive back says winning Grey Cup was 'amazing', calls Calgary a true 'family'

The Calgary Stampeders signed defensive back Fred Bennett to a contract extension Tuesday.

Bennett was a West Division all-star last year after recording three interceptions and 44 tackles. He also forced a fumble, recovered a fumble and had three pass knockdowns.

Bennett had an interception in the Stamps' victory over Edmonton in the West Division final. He had two tackles in the Grey Cup as Calgary defeated Hamilton to win the CFL title.

"Winning a Grey Cup in 2014, the first championship of my career, was an amazing experience," Bennett said in a release. "I'm thankful to be a part of a great organization. It's the true meaning of family."


Fred Bennett GETTY IMAGES

Bennett, 31, signed with the Stampeders in 2012 after a NFL career that included stops with the Houston Texans, San Diego Chargers, Cincinnati Bengals and Arizona Cardinals.

"Fred has established himself as an important part of our defence and as one of the best cornerbacks in the league," said Stampeders coach and general manager John Hufnagel. "I'm pleased that he's chosen to make this commitment to the organization and look forward to more good things from him in the seasons ahead."

Bennett has never missed a game during his three-year CFL career. In 54 regular-season games, he has 129 tackles, five special-teams tackles, nine interceptions, one fumble recovery and five forced fumbles.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Leafs put up a fight, but lose 10th straight

Nashville Predators defenceman Seth Jones, top, scores a short-handed goal against Toronto's goalie Jonathan Bernier Tuesday, in Nashville, Tenn. The Leafs entered the second period losing 2-0, rallied to go up 3-2, but Nashville came back to win 4-3 and deliver the Leafs their 10th straight loss. MARK HUMPHREY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MMA

Silva steroids test positive: UFC

The UFC says former middleweight champion Anderson Silva has tested positive for steroid use.

Silva tested positive for Drostanolone metabolites in a January test, according to the Nevada Athletic Commission. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

Dubnyk helps Wild beat Chicago

Devan Dubnyk stopped 24 shots in his third shootout since joining Minnesota in mid-January, leading the Wild to their fourth straight win, 3-0 over the Chicago Blackhawks on Tuesday night.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CFL

Heenan signs with NFL's Colts

Saskatchewan Roughriders GM Brendan Taman wasn't surprised to lose Ben Heenan to the NFL.

The right guard signed with the Indianapolis Colts Tuesday, leaving a huge hole in the Riders' offensive line. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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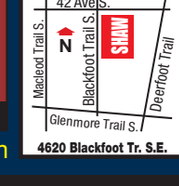

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2015 Mazda3 Sport

- **Type.** Five-door, FWD, compact hatchback
- **Engines.** 2.0-litre I4 (215 hp), 2.5-litre I4 (184)
- **Transmissions.** Six-speed manual, six-speed automatic
- **Price.** $17,690 base, $30,490 as tested

Market position

The Mazda3 is a perennial top-five seller in Canada, and Mazda's top model. It is available in three trims (GX, GS, GT), and as sedan or hatchback. It is positioned as a better-looking compact-car alternative that is also more fun to drive.
• Includes Mazda's Sky-Active technologies for better fuel efficiency.

Points

• New-generation Mazda3 was introduced for 2014.
• Voted Best New Compact Car Under $21,000 by the Automotive Journalists Association of Canada.
• A manual transmission can now be paired with the larger 2.5-litre engine.
• Attractive styling formed from Mazda's Kodo 'soul of motion' design language.

The swoopy design does infringe on the cargo area and rear seats.

Notable features

• The optional Technology package on the automatic GT includes i-ELOOP regenerative braking, Smart City brake support, auto-levelling headlights, and warning systems for lane departure, rear cross traffic and blind spots.
• The GT is also available with 18-inch alloy wheels, voice-activated navigation, and a heads-up display.

Fun, practical and gorgeous, too

PHOTOS: MIKE GOETZ

Review. Curvaceous new Mazda3 hatchback is almost as much fun to drive as it is to stand back and admire

MIKE GOETZ
drive@metronews.ca

Debuting in 2014, the striking new Mazda3 is a revelation: The hatchback version, known as the Mazda3 Sport, is just as beautiful as the sedan.

The compact hatchback has long delivered a lot of versatility, space and value for its size. Now, Mazda has demonstrated it can be beautiful, too.

The new Sport also offers a great handling package; a modern interior with a full suite of gizmos; and decent get-up-and-go and fuel efficiency.

For 2015, Mazda fixed the one item that irked faithful fans about the new model, or at least those who prefer sportiness and driver involvement. It finally made the six-speed manual transmission available with the larger and more gruntful 184-hp 2.4-litre engine. Last year, manual was only available for the 2.0-litre base engine.

A six-speed manual GT ($26,995) was our test model for the week. Add in the special Soul Red Mica paint job ($300), the Luxury package ($1,500) and $1,695 for freight and delivery, and the total price was $30,490.

Now you might be saying, "I could buy a midsize sedan for that much money," and you'd be right. But maybe a premium hatchback is exactly what you're looking for.

Although you can find hatchbacks with bigger power numbers, the quality of power delivery in the GT will keep you satisfied. The excellent throttle response is such that your right foot is always happy and in control, no matter what the conditions. And the six-speed manual and clutch are both smooth and lovely to manipulate.

The front seats are well sculpted for comfort, but may be a bit low for some drivers.

The overall ride is on the firm side, and contributes to a bit of road noise coming into the cabin. But if you can live with that, the Mazda3 really rewards the driver — few mass-market compacts are this much fun to drive.

The console-mounted HMI Commander master control knob is Mazda's new way of helping you navigate everything on the display screen. Although it is intuitive, I don't think it's the ultimate solution.

But all automakers are struggling to keep their interfaces easy to use while adding all the new stuff we need to interface with.

And, unfortunately, Mazda's best high-tech features — including i-ELOOP and the safety monitoring systems — are reserved for the automatic-transmission GT model and its exclusive Technology package (four grand more than our test car).

The front seats are well sculpted for comfort, but may sit a bit low for some drivers. The back seats are comfy, too, although the rear passengers and cargo area do feel the pinch of the swoopy new exterior design.

But the Mazda3 Sport GT manages to check almost every other box for adventurous drivers, and looks very good doing it.

Compare

1 Ford Focus hatch
Base price: $21,364
Fun to drive, cozier back seat.

2 Subaru Impreza hatch
Base price: $22,490
Good all-rounder, and with all-wheel drive.

3 Hyundai Elantra GT
Base price: $20,044
Impressive combination of style and technology.

DRIVE

Extolling the virtues of the X Factor

From Acura's much-anticipated NSX and Tesla's much-delayed Model X to Lincoln's booming MKX crossover and Jaguar's lustworthy XE sedan, the lowly letter X has suddenly become a major player in the world of automotive nomenclature

MIKE DOJC drive@metronews.ca

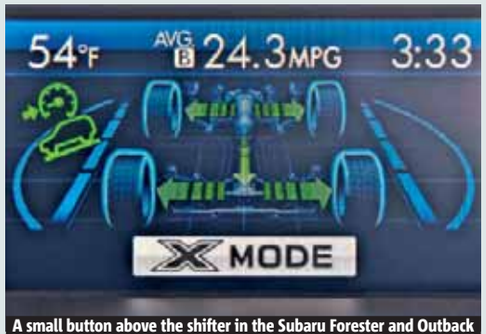
Extraordinary: Subaru X Mode

Body panels made of an indestructible alloy, like the one fused to Wolverine's skeleton that sprout from the X-Man's knuckles when he means business, are a long way off. Ditto for cars able to bend weather to meet our whims, a la Wolvie's teammate Storm.

But vehicles are packing more superpower features lately.

Subaru Forester and Outback drivers can press the special X Mode button above the shifter to amp up AWD engagement and increase traction when confronted with gnarly conditions, such as a steep, unpaved snow-covered road.

And an early X adopter, BMW, dubbed its four-wheel-drive system xDrive 12 years ago.



A small button above the shifter in the Subaru Forester and Outback ramps up the all-wheel-drive system to improve traction. CONTRIBUTED

Exalted: Lincoln MKX

Luxury crossovers have long been infatuated with the letter X, often slipping one into a model's name for added cachet.

Consider the prescription to mid-sized SUV mundanity that is the Lexus RX, or the Cadillac Escalade's little brother, the SRX.

So you just know by the letter's presence that the Oakville-assembled Lincoln MKX has got it going on.

The 2016 model's 19-speaker Revel Ultima system with Quantum-Logic surround sound cocoons drivers in a rolling concert hall.

Lincoln's MKX luxury crossover features a 19-speaker surround-sound stereo system and a 360-degree view from outside the vehicle.

Another top-shelf feature is the 360-degree camera with a cross-traffic-peaking 180-degree split view — taking all the ding worry out of manoeuvring a tight space in the grocery store parking lot.

Experimental: Acura NSX

In 1948, the sound-barrier-busting Bell X-1 was a sheer revelation.

The 2016 Acura NSX (an acronym for New Sports Experimental) has similar "leave 'em breathless" aspirations.

When Tony Stark climbed behind the wheel of the concept version of this Acura beauty in a brief scene at the end of the first Avengers movie, any memory of the Audi R8 featured in the Iron Man movies faded away.

If this twin-turbo V6 gas-electric hybrid supercar (generating more than 550 hp) is good enough for Iron Man to drive, then it's certainly good enough to sit and look pretty in your driveway.

Extreme: Tesla X

SpaceX, Elon Musk's foray into the final frontier, is already the first private company to launch a spacecraft and have it return from orbit.

The company is now working on a reusable rocket, where after separating from a spacecraft, the rocket's first stage will land on a floating drone platform.

X also marks the spot for Tesla, Musk's more grounded company. The oft-delayed Model X, featuring top-hinged folding falcon wing doors for easy step-in access, is set to begin deliveries at the end of the year.

Exhilarating: Jaguar XE

Ravenous automotive writers licked their chops when the come-hither headlights, expressive lines, and sleek contours of the athletic aluminum- bodied Jaguar XE were exposed at the Detroit auto show.

Jaguar's first compact sedan since the soft-selling X-Type is squarely aimed at the same car buyers lustfully eyeing the BMW 3-series and the Audi A4.

It rocks a 3-litre supercharged V6 that generates 340 hp and can go 0-96 km/h in 4.9 seconds.

For sexier fuel economy, there will be an optional diesel version expected to deliver upwards of 5.9 L/100 km.

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Innovative seat design has lofty objectives

Driving Force. Modular concept could make rear seats more customizable and much lighter than current designs

JIL MCINTOSH
drive@metronews.ca

Vehicle technology is constantly being improved, and it's far more than just the engines and safety features.

Even seats come under scrutiny, and a new design under development could dramatically change the way car interiors are built. Called a loft seat, its modular construction is unlike anything being produced right now.

"We have seen modular concept designs in the past, and its day has arrived," says Peter Cansfield, principal industrial designer for automotive supplier Johnson Controls, which developed the loft seat. "This gives us the flexibility to meet what the customer wants."

Most seats consist of a metal frame, cushions and a head restraint. These individual units are then bolted to brackets on the vehicle's floor.

In contrast, the loft seat starts with a steel crossbeam that goes from one side of the car to the other. The modular seat components are then attached to it, allowing automakers the potential for a variety of seat configurations.

The company has initially designed the loft concept for a luxury sedan, using premium upholstery and a thin cushioning material called Super Resilient Foam, which creates more interior space while still remaining comfortable.

The seatbacks and cushions fold to reveal hidden storage spaces for cargo.

The concept seat also includes a multi-level centre console with a high armrest for comfort, along with wireless device charging, and cupholders that telescope out of the console to hold taller mugs when needed, but can be pushed back down and out of the way when they're not required.

All cars contain steel beams, called crossmembers, that run under the floor to keep the chassis rigid, and to absorb and deflect crash energy in a collision.

The loft seat's support beam works the same way, allowing the automaker to eliminate one of the lower crossmembers. This, plus the modular seat's lighter weight when compared to a traditional seat, can potentially reduce the vehicle's overall weight, which in turn improves fuel economy.

In future, Cansfield says, the seat's support beam could be made out of strong, but even lighter materials, such as aluminum or carbon fibre.

The loft seat could potentially be incorporated into cars within the next five to 10 years but, because it is a structural component, it can't be retrofitted to an existing vehicle.

"It could be any time within the next generation of vehicles," Cansfield says. "You need to be in at the start of the vehicle architecture, and they would have to design the car around this."

Sitting pretty

- Although the loft seat concept was designed for large sedans, it has the potential to be adapted to almost any vehicle.
- As with all vehicle seats, the loft would have to include seatbelts and meet crash-test standards.
- The company also developed FreshPer4mance, a coating that keeps liquids and dirt from soaking into upholstery.

Quoted

"We have seen modular concept designs in the past, and its day has arrived. This gives us the flexibility to meet what the customer wants."
Peter Cansfield, industrial designer for automotive supplier Johnson Controls

Instead of being bolted to the floor, the loft seats attach to a crossbeam, allowing a variety of configurations . CONTRIBUTED

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Drivers could soon see through pillars or follow ghosts

Jaguar is testing the idea of adding video screens to car pillars to give drivers a virtual view through them. AFP

Jaguar has come up with an innovative way to improve visibility, and a spooky take on how its navigation system gives directions to drivers.

One of the ironies of designing cars that are safer in accidents is that the extra reinforcements around doors and windows reduce visibility.

But what if all of the pillars were transparent, giving the driver true all-around visibility?

That's the idea behind Jaguar Land Rover's latest safety research. The automaker is experimenting with adding video screens to all pillars so driver can virtually see through them.

The system would only be activated when needed. For example, when changing lanes, the car would know to turn on the B and C pillar screens to coincide with the driver checking the blind spot.

"Our ultimate aim is to reduce road accidents and enhance the urban driving experience," said Wolfgang Epple, the company's director of research and technology. "If we can keep the driver's eyes on the road ahead and present information in a non-distracting way, we can help drivers make better decisions in the most demanding and congested driving environments."

The automaker is also developing a Ghost Car concept for its navigation system. Instead of glancing down at a map on a console display and listening to verbal directions, wouldn't it be easier to just follow the car in front? Jaguar's idea is to project a virtual car onto the road ahead that will lead the way. AFP

A projected ghost car shows drivers the way to their destination.

Drivers Ed. Simulator distracts teens for safety

A new virtual-reality headset from Oculus Rift is being used by Toyota to teach young drivers the dangers of distracted driving.

Teens wear the headset behind the wheel of a parked car and find themselves on a three-dimensional, virtual street full of mayhem.

Using the car's steering wheel and pedals, it's up to the user to navigate safely while avoiding distractions or face the consequences.

Far from a video game, the simulator confronts users with real-life distractions, such as text messages, the radio and passengers.

It's not like going to the movies, either. The 3D video and audio make it as immersive and realistic as possible.

The simulator is free for teens to use at Toyota's TeenDrive365 displays at auto shows across the U.S. There are no plans yet to bring it to Canada. AFP

A virtual-reality headset teaches teens the dangers of distracted driving. AFP

AUGMENTED REALITY

Stuck on 12 Across? Scan this image with your Metro News app for today's crossword and Sudoku answers. It's OK. No one's watching.

metro AR

→ See the full instructions on Metro's Voices page.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Some things can be explained purely by logic but what you have to deal with today will require you to use your intuition. The first explanation that pops into your head is likely to be the right one.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You will take risks purely for the fun of it today. The good news is you will win nine times out of ten, and when you do lose it will only be a minor setback.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You have done plenty of thinking and planning, now you must act. Don't be half-hearted about what needs to be done.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Try things you would not normally attempt today. The results could be spectacular or spectacularly disappointing but that is a risk worth taking.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
The pressure will be on today but that's OK because no one handles it better than you. When the going gets tough the tough get going and one way or another you will go far over the next few days.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You seem to be in two minds about what you should do. That is nothing unusual but today is different because you have to make a quick decision.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
If you start something new today you must expect it to take up a lot more time and energy than you expected. It means you'll have less time and energy to waste on trivial things.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You may not want to do what a friend wants you to do today but if you are smart you will go along with their plans. A few days from now the roles will be reversed and you will be the one in need of support.

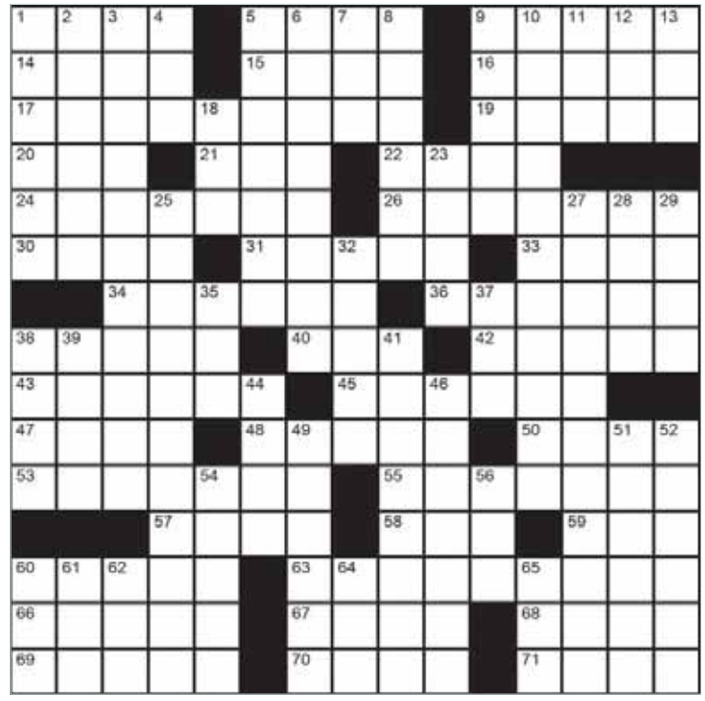
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Life is too short to worry about what other people think of you, so follow your desires come what may. You have played by the book far too often of late.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Do not allow yourself to get dragged into a dispute between friends or colleagues. Even if you get involved out of good intentions you are likely to make an enemy.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You are in a determined mood and anyone who thinks they are tough enough to take you on is making a big mistake.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
The only thing you're interested in now is the truth and you will do whatever it takes to get it. Maybe that is why certain people look so worried.

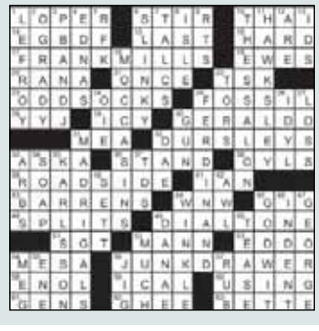
Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



Across
1. Puppy's fun move
5. Theatre award
9. Artificial sweetener brand
14. Miss
15. The __ Shoe Museum, in Toronto
16. Director Sidney
17. Real life Montreal lunch counter in The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz
19. Main meanings
20. __ Young Band
21. Shoe width size
22. Manitoba: West-of-Winnipeg town
24. Stretches
26. Alberta town; or, British car
30. King __ (Shakespeare tragedy)
31. Uncle __ (Anton Chekhov play)
33. Non-meat-eater's org.
34. In a fine way
36. Atomic Number 16
38. Type of headscarf
40. 'Ether' suffix
42. __-A (Skincare product)
43. Complainer
45. Canadian food retailer
47. Atkins = Low-__ diet
48. "_ __ it my all."
50. Commands to attack dogs
53. Posh cues game
55. Devoured: 2 wds.
57. "Are __ __ longer a couple?" (What's our status?)
58. Traveller's wee way
59. Mop & __ (Floor cleaner)
60. Sci-Fi weapon, __ ray gun
63. Religious region in the South in the USA: 2 wds.
66. Cross with: 2 wds.
67. "...friend or _ __?"
68. Rocker Mr. Michaels
69. Wheat __ (Nabisco crackers)
70. Nobleman's negatives
71. "Woodstock" gr.

Down
1. Flourish: 2 wds.
2. One of The Dionne Quintuplets
3. The Snows of __ (Ernest Hemingway story)
4. Summer: French
5. Closely watch
6. Pies and cookies event: 2 wds.
7. 'Human' suffix
8. Slip past: 2 wds.
9. Port __, Ontario
10. Library request: 2 wds.
11. Speech-maker's stumbles
12. At the age of, in Latin [abbr.]
13. Some officers, briefly
18. Social pages word
23. Ms. Thompson's
25. Mayor of Winnipeg: 2 wds.
27. Some hockey forwards: 2 wds.
28. Lovely kit
29. Knitting supply
32. Antelope variety
35. UK honour [acronym]
37. Website
38. RCN ship designation
39. Mr. Gruffudd
41. "Turn Me Loose" Canadian band
44. Nothing: French
46. Fab Four
49. Josh of song
51. Canadian actor Sean
52. Uneven
54. Odes-creator John
56. Putter's peg
60. Intl. clock standard
61. Ooh and __
62. Gladiator's 1501
64. "... __ _ woodchuck could..."
65. Cable channel, _ _ _ Canada

Yesterday's Crossword



Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

		6	5					
	9		1					
4				9				5
6	7	2			8	4	9	
		5						8
		3						2
		7	9	4	5	2	8	3
		9		7		5		6
		4		6		1		9

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Yesterday's Sudoku

9	5	6	1	8	2	3	7	4
8	4	1	7	3	5	2	6	9
3	7	2	6	4	9	8	5	1
1	8	3	2	7	4	5	9	6
4	2	5	9	6	1	7	8	3
7	6	9	3	5	8	4	1	2
2	9	4	8	1	7	6	3	5
5	3	7	4	9	6	1	2	8
6	1	8	5	2	3	9	4	7

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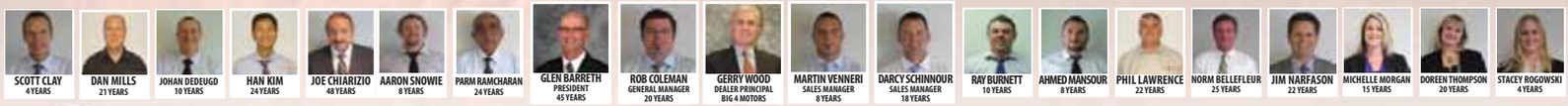

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